San Mateo County Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities

Pandemic Recovery Framework

The Framework Will Continue to Be Updated as New Information Becomes Available

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The Framework was developed in consultation with San Mateo County Health, and reflects the guidance in the California Public Health Department’s (CDPH) Guidance for Schools, COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2020–2021 School Year, as well as CDE’s Stronger Together, a Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California’s Public Schools.
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I. Laying the Foundation for Recovery

As COVID-19 took hold and spread within San Mateo County in March 2020, the county’s Health Officer issued two orders that significantly impacted how schools operated. The School Operations Modification Order was issued on March 13, 2020, and required all schools to transition immediately from on-campus to at-home learning. A Shelter-in-Place Order followed on March 16, 2020, which dictated that all but essential staff work from home. Governor Gavin Newsom issued a state order on March 19, 2020, directing all California residents to shelter in place.

After the State approved its request for a variance on June 16, San Mateo County became eligible to move more quickly through Stage 2 of the California Resilience Roadmap and align itself with the State guidance.

On July 17, 2020, Governor Newsom set forth conditions for conducting in-person learning as well as guidance on conditions that would trigger a school campus to close again due to COVID-19. This guidance was anchored to the state’s monitoring list for counties.

On August 28, 2020, Governor Newsom released the “Blueprint for a Safer Economy,” which replaced the monitoring list structure with a four-tiered, color-coded system that tracks counties by the number of COVID-19 cases recorded each day and percentage of positive cases out of the total number of tests administered, both averaged over seven days. This guidance governs whether school campuses may reopen for in-person instruction and is addressed in the next section of this document.

On December 30, 2020, the Governor announced the California Safe Schools for All Plan, a phased-in approach to returning students to campus for in-person learning. The plan, which was released on January 14, 2021, includes funding, safety and mitigation steps, oversight and assistance, and transparency and accountability. The plan builds on the guidance provided by the California Department of Public Health and the State’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy and is also addressed in the next section of this document.

A. State Guidance for Reopening

On August 28, 2020, with the release of the “Blueprint for a Safer Economy,” California had a new system guiding the reopening of schools for in-person instruction. The Blueprint is a four-tiered, color-coded system that tracks counties by the number of
COVID-19 cases recorded each day and the percentage of positive cases out of the total number of tests administered, both averaged over seven days.

San Mateo County started on the Purple, or most restrictive, Tier, and San Mateo County schools were able to bring back students in TK–6th grade with the approval of a waiver. San Mateo County Health (SMCH) and the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) developed a waiver review process in which SMCH and SMCOE reviewed the waiver requests, and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) granted final approvals.

Between September 22 and early December, 2020, San Mateo County moved through the Red Tier, the Orange Tier, back to the Red Tier, and ultimately to the most restrictive Purple Tier. While in the Purple Tier, schools serving students in grades 6–12 that had not yet opened to in-person learning were required to wait until COVID-19 conditions put the county into the Red Tier for two consecutive weeks. Those schools that had already opened were not required to close.

On December 30, 2020, the California Safe Schools for All Plan was announced with accompanying guidance released on January 14, 2021. This most recent guidance provided the support and accountability necessary to establish a clear path to minimize in-school transmissions and enable, first, a phased return to in-person instruction, and then ongoing safe in-person instruction. The plan includes four key areas of focus: funding; safety and mitigation; oversight and assistance; and transparency and accountability.

1. **Funding.** The Governor proposes $2 billion for the safe reopening of schools, with a priority for returning the youngest children (TK–2nd grade) and those who are most disproportionately impacted first, then returning other grade levels to in-person instruction through the spring.

2. **Safety & Mitigation.** To further ensure health and safety in the classroom, the State will focus on implementing the four key measures:
   a. **Testing.** State support for frequent COVID-19 testing for all school staff and students, including weekly testing at schools in communities with high rates of transmission.
   b. **PPE.** All staff and students in schools are required to wear masks. The State will recommend and provide surgical masks for school staff at no
cost. Schools can also leverage state-negotiated master contracts for PPE to reduce costs and streamline supply chains.

c. **Contact Tracing.** Schools will be added to the School Portal for Outbreak Tracking (SPOT) to improve collaboration between school and health officials. Members of the state contact tracing workforce will be deployed to improve communication with schools.

d. **Vaccinations.** School staff will be prioritized in the distribution of vaccines through the spring of 2021.

3. **Oversight & Assistance.** The Safe Schools for All Team, a cross-agency team composed of dedicated staff from CDPH, Cal/OSHA, and educational agencies, will provide hands-on support to help schools develop and implement their COVID-19 Safety Plans. These supports include school visits and walk-throughs as warranted, webinars and training materials, and ongoing technical assistance.

4. **Transparency & Accountability.** A state dashboard will enable all Californians to see their school’s reopening status, level of available funding, and data on in-school transmissions. A web-based “hotline” will empower school staff and parents to report concerns to the Safe Schools for All Team, which will lead to escalating levels of intervention, starting with technical assistance and ending with legal enforcement.

On January 14, 2021, the California Department of Public Health also released its **COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year**, which updated and consolidated state guidance from the CDPH and Cal/OSHA to align with the state’s Safe Schools for All Plan.

This Framework reflects California’s current health orders and guidance as provided by CDPH and the California Department of Education (CDE). To clarify, the Governor has ordered, in multiple executive orders, that all California residents heed the guidance and directives of the state public health officer. This was also reinforced in the State’s guidance on January 14, 2021, “This guidance is a public health directive that applies to all public and private schools operating in California. Under operative executive orders and provisions of the California Health and Safety Code, schools must comply with orders and guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health and relevant for local health departments to limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect public health.”
For more specific and up-to-date information, visit [California’s reopening data map](#).

**Providing In-Person Targeted, Specialized Support and Services for Students at School**

On September 4, 2020, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued updated small setting guidance for small groups and limited instruction, targeted support services, and facilitation of distance learning in small group environments for a specified subset or group of children and youth. The guidance allows schools that cannot reopen for in-person instruction because their county is in Tier 4 (Purple), as well as schools in those jurisdictions that have not yet received a waiver, to provide in-person support to small groups of students.

Under this small setting guidance, schools can bring in students for in-person targeted, specialized support and services in stable groups when the school is able to satisfy all of the conditions detailed in the guidance, including limiting group size, restricting mixing, and maintaining proper physical distancing, masking, cleaning, and other safety measures. All schools bringing students back on campus in San Mateo County should follow the Four Pillars to ensure the greatest safety for students and staff.

Please note: The small setting guidance is distinct from the plan review process. Schools that received a waiver approval or sign-off on their plan to return students to campus for in-person learning must adhere to the [COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction framework & Public Health Guidance for K–12 Schools in California, 2020–2021 School Year](#), which is reflected in the Pandemic Recovery Framework, and any applicable order or directive of the local public health office.
B. Targeted Audience for Framework

The primary audience for this Framework is local education agencies (LEAs) and private schools serving children in grades preschool to twelfth grade. Licensed Child Care facilities have multiple regulatory agencies. Should guidelines differ, follow the stricter guidance. For more information on licensed Child Care and Early Learning Programs, please refer to the State’s Early Learning and Care Playbook and the Licensed Early Learning and Care Companion Document associated with this Framework.

C. Districts and Schools

School districts and school programs, including early childcare, must ensure that public health conditions as determined by local and state health officials drive the planning and implementation of any educational program. In order to accomplish safe school operations amid the COVID-19 pandemic, school leaders must be able to implement the following actions:

- Collaborate with public health officials and the San Mateo County Office of Education to help monitor and respond to cases of COVID-19 within school communities
- Provide essential protective equipment to all staff and effectively implement hygiene protocols, physical distancing, and cleaning and disinfecting practices as described in the Four Pillars
- Implement efficient but effective health and temperature screenings for students, staff, and visitors who come on campus
- Provide surveillance testing of school staff at least once a month
- Be prepared to transition between at-home and on-campus learning using a continuum of instructional practices that support the diverse needs of all students
- Refer to specific requirements from CDE and Child Care Community Care Licensing for preschool programs when appropriate

D. Leadership and Policy

Policy makers must do all they can to support school leaders as they strive to provide high quality education to all students while maintaining safe learning environments. School leaders cannot do this work alone; flexible and forward-thinking policymaking
at the federal, state, and local levels is essential to the successful education of our students. Elected leaders have an important role to play in advocating for student needs, including prioritizing school funding and supporting operational flexibility.

**E. Focus on Equity**

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed pre-existing and untenable inequities in California’s education system that leaves some of our most vulnerable students and families without critical support when they need it most. Some students may have limited or no access to digital devices or connectivity while others may have lost the benefit of personalized curriculum or one-on-one instructional support. Some families have received limited guidance in supporting their children’s at-home learning.

Additionally, reductions in school funding are expected as state revenues decline due to the economic impact of the pandemic. It is likely that as long as the pandemic persists as a public health threat, the additional stress on funding California schools will also persist.

**Despite these challenges, the San Mateo County Pandemic Recovery Framework for Schools calls on school leaders, elected school board members, and education professionals across all content areas to conduct planning for return to school and continuity of learning in a way that prioritizes students with the most urgent needs.**

By implementing physical distancing on school campuses, it is unlikely that all students are able to participate in on-campus learning at one time. It is important that decisions about students’ educational programs are grounded in equity and aim to provide every student what they need when they need it.

The COVID-19 pandemic provides San Mateo County a compelling opportunity to respond with equity as its top priority. If we set an ambitious goal that ensures every student is on track for success, academically, socially, and emotionally by the end of 2022, our decision making must be notably bold and courageous.

All students benefit from equity-driven systems. Return to school planning teams can ensure every student gets what they need when they need it. Planning teams are strongly encouraged to begin their planning process by identifying the unique needs of students who:

- qualify for special education services
- experience housing insecurity or who are homeless
• are English Language Learners and/or whose families are English Language Learners
• are in the foster care system
• receive counseling services
• experience grief/loss/sickness
• are undocumented
• provide childcare for siblings or their own children
• have little or no access to technology or whose technology skills are underdeveloped
• have skills that are below grade level or are behind in credits and are experiencing trauma

Equity-Driven Planning will consider:

• strengthening district-level structures to assist families with questions and emergent or unique circumstances
• supporting access to technology hardware and connectivity and providing computer literacy support to students and parents who need it
• providing targeted learning and communication supports for students and families who do not speak English
• developing strategies to support students who participate in distance learning and who are experiencing insecure housing or whose home environment is not conducive to everyday learning
• ensuring students and families have current information about mental health resources and support
• supporting or providing access to home-to-school transportation

The role of schools in supporting families’ multiple needs has sharply increased in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery. Schools should ensure families have current information about community resources and provide assistance to help families access:

• child care
• food
• legal services
Equity-driven planning should also take into consideration the needs of school staff around the use of technology, child care, mental health supports, and general health and well-being.

**F. How to Use the Framework**

The San Mateo County Pandemic Recovery Framework for Schools provides school leaders with the health, education, and legal guidance needed to develop local plans for the safe reopening of school campuses in San Mateo County regardless of whether that is at the start of the school year or at some later point.

Given that Governor Newsom stated, “Californians should not expect a return to ‘normal’ life until there is herd immunity and a vaccine exists for COVID-19,” (4/15/20) this Framework provides school leaders with a continuum of learning options that support the flexible delivery of education amid further possible restrictions to in-person learning throughout the 2020-21 school year.

This Framework was developed as a collaboration of the San Mateo County Office of Education, San Mateo County district superintendents and administrators, San Mateo County Health, and San Mateo County Counsel. Additional technical review was provided by San Mateo County’s Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities Steering Committee. The Framework is aligned with State and County orders as well as guidance provided by the California Department of Public Health and the California Department of Education.

**G. Four Pillars: Health and Hygiene, Face Coverings, Physical Distancing, and Limiting Gatherings**

The dangers of community spread of COVID-19 cannot be understated. Despite the fact that the U.S. declared a national emergency in mid-March and many Americans have followed strict guidelines including sheltering at home, nearly 100,000 Americans died from COVID-19 in the first five months of 2020. In January 2021, that number surpassed 400,000.

Scientists continue to learn more every day about this virus, but what seems clear at this time is the likelihood of spread increases in accordance with the amount of exposure
or the “dose” of the virus. “Dose” is based on proximity, or how physically close people are to each other, and time, how much time people spend in close proximity. The Four Pillars of the San Mateo County Pandemic Recovery Framework (health and hygiene protocols, face coverings, physical distancing, and limiting gatherings) are intended to work in concert to reduce the likelihood of spread within the school setting.

The behaviors and actions included in the Four Pillars are grounded in science and represent best practices in preventing the spread of communicable disease. As research has shown, effective implementation of the mitigation strategies included in the Four Pillars can significantly reduce community spread within a school so that in-person learning can be sustained with integrity. And yet, until there is widespread vaccination in the community, some families will choose to protect against illness from COVID-19 by continuing to shelter in place. Schools should consider continuing to offer distance learning as one option for families who remain sheltering at home. Additionally, district administrators can utilize existing human resource processes for determining accommodation for employees who express health concerns.

The Four Pillars also provide an opportunity to create new school norms that can improve health and safety for all members of the school community and, therefore, can serve to improve academic, social, and emotional outcomes for all students.

Licensed Child Care facilities have multiple regulatory agencies. Should guidelines differ, follow the stricter guidance.

**H. A Step-by-Step Approach**

Incremental implementation of the district’s return-to-school plan is well supported by international examples, mirrors county and statewide processes for reopening society, and provides a careful approach to returning students and staff to in-person learning. In cooperation with San Mateo County Health, school operations will be informed by public health data applicable to both the school community and the county. A step-by-step approach enables schools to be nimble in responding to current and changing conditions. An in-depth description of the framework steps is included in section III, *General Planning Assumptions.*
II. Governance Structures

Government agencies, school district leadership, and elected boards have distinct but important roles and responsibilities in emergency response and recovery. During an emergency such as the current public health crisis, community leaders should be mindful of their specific roles, honor those boundaries, and trust and offer support to their partner agencies. This section reviews the scope of authority of various government and district agencies and leaders.

A. Role of the School District

During the COVID–19 threat, the district is responsible for maintaining its essential operations and supporting the public health where possible.

School district officials will follow state and local health guidance and data in monitoring the threat of COVID–19, promoting strategies to prevent disease transmission, and preparing and implementing modified school operations.

During a COVID–19 outbreak, the district will continue all prevention strategies and will take direction from state and local health authorities regarding measures necessary to control transmission of the disease.

- **Declaration of Emergency**
  Although the District Superintendent has the authority to declare a district emergency during a public health emergency, San Mateo County Health is the County’s lead agency and public health authority. To the greatest extent possible, school closures or student dismissal decisions (and when to remain in session) will be made in consultation with and/or at the direction of state and local public health authorities.

- **Public Employees are Disaster Service Workers**
  California Government Code – [Sections 3100 – 3109](#) – compel all public employees, including school administrators, teachers, and classified staff, to serve in the capacity of Disaster Services Workers “subject to such disaster service activities as may be assigned to them by their superiors or by law.”

- **Activation**
  The authority to activate a recovery plan rests with the superintendent.
• **Coordination**  
The district office will coordinate the actions and functions as described within the recovery plan with city and county agencies, and any other affected entities.

• **Notifications**  
The superintendent will notify district administrators that a recovery plan has been activated.

The Public Information Officer (PIO), or the staff member filling that role as part of the district’s Incident Command structure, will be responsible for ensuring all public communications are consistent with the goals established by the superintendent. All communications with stakeholders (internal and external) and with the media will be issued or authorized by the PIO or designee.

• **Notification within Each Campus**  
Responsibility for communicating response or recovery actions and intentions begins with the Principal or Site Director.

**B. Role of the School Board**

Elected school board members work together with their superintendent as a governance team to make decisions that will best serve all students in the community. In the midst of a significant emergency such as the COVID-19 pandemic, this collaborative relationship is especially critical for the safety of all community members and the successful delivery of education for students.

Similarly, effective implementation of this Framework by the governance team must be built on trust in the professional experience and pedagogical leadership of the superintendent. During the phases of emergency response and recovery, honoring these clear boundaries regarding each respective leader’s role is key to a successful response.

• **Policy Oversight**  
The school board will provide support to the district emergency recovery effort by evaluating whether district board policies (BP) or administrative regulations (AR) need to be adopted or amended to address COVID-19 impacts.
• **Board Policies of Note for COVID-19 Response**
  A sample COVID-19 mitigation board policy, which aligns with State guidance provided on July 17, 2020, can be accessed here.

• **Advocacy**
  The school board will determine which advocacy efforts the board will prioritize, especially around school funding. At a minimum, reopening schools with physical distancing in place requires additional funding to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and their families.

  On the federal level, additional investments in education are urgently needed to assist schools now and through the coming months to support COVID-19 recovery efforts.

• **Communication**
  The school board will determine how the board can support the District’s communication plan, aligned with Board Bylaw 9010 (Public Statements). Clear and consistent messaging and community engagement by the board can help inform the community and instill trust and confidence.

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**C. Role of the San Mateo County Office of Education**

Led by the County Superintendent of Schools, the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) supports school districts by performing some tasks that can be done more efficiently and effectively at the county level.

During a regional emergency, SMCOE assists by facilitating communication and coordination across the PreK-14 community, acting as a liaison and advocate for the county’s school systems with regional partners, and providing training, technical assistance, and support.

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**D. Role of the County of San Mateo**

Numerous federal, state, and local statutes authorize public health actions to control the spread of an infectious disease such as COVID-19. Under California law, a local health officer who believes a contagious, infectious, or communicable disease exists within the territory under their jurisdiction “shall take measures as may be necessary to prevent the spread of the disease or occurrence of additional cases” and to protect the...
In a pandemic response, San Mateo County Health will be the lead local agency and will activate its Department Operations Center (DOC) when necessary. County Health will work in collaboration with the County Manager’s Office and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to limit the spread of an outbreak within the community’s borders. Activities will include the following:

- Emergency command and management
- Surveillance
- Emergency medical response
- Maintenance of essential health and medical services
- Maintenance of other essential services
- Communications
- Vaccine or antiviral distribution (when available)

Role of the County Health Officer

Each county is mandated to “take measures as may be necessary to preserve and protect the public health,” and the health officer plays a key role in fulfilling this duty. California law requires each county to appoint a health officer, who must be a physician. California law grants local health officers broad authority to take action to prevent disease. For example, the health officer is vested with authority to issue orders, including orders for isolation and quarantine. California Health and Safety Code § 120175.5(b) provides, “the local health officer may issue orders to other governmental entities within the local health officer’s jurisdiction to take any action the local health officer deems necessary to control the spread of the communicable disease.”

Governor Newsom’s Executive Order N-60-20, Section 3, provides that “[n]othing in this Order shall be construed to limit the existing authority of local health officers to establish and implement public health measures within their respective jurisdictions that are more restrictive than, or that otherwise exist in addition to, the public health measures imposed on a statewide basis pursuant to the statewide directives of the State Public Health Officer.”

Please note, the most restrictive order takes precedence whether it comes from the county, the state, or the federal government.
E. Notifications

The Communication Structure (see Appendix) illustrates the coordinated flow of information from San Mateo County Health to the education community. Given County Health’s expanded contract tracing team and the continued interest in streamlining communication, SMCOE and San Mateo County Health continue to update the communication structure with schools. Schools with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in their school community will contact County Health within 24 hours and directly using a designated phone number that will be shared with school leaders for their use, or their designee’s use, in reporting cases.

Schools will continue to notify SMCOE of cases so that it can continue to serve as technical support to school leaders and maintain an understanding of the extent and impact of COVID-19 in San Mateo County schools.

Beginning January 25, 2021, every local educational agency (school district, county office of education, and charter school) and private school in California shall notify the California Department of Public Health whether it is serving students in-person. Specifically, the local educational agency or private school shall report the following information:

- In-person instruction is provided full-time, including whether provided for all grades served by the local educational agency or private school or only certain grade spans.
- In-person instruction is provided only part-time (hybrid model), including whether provided for all grades served by the local educational agency or private school or only certain grade spans.
- In-person instruction and services are provided only pursuant to the Guidance Related to Cohorts issued by the California Department of Public Health.
- No in-person instruction and services are provided (distance learning only).

LEAs and private schools must report the information via a web form, which was developed by the California Department of Public Health and will be made available on the Safe Schools for All Hub website. This reporting shall continue every other Monday (or the Tuesday immediately following, if the Monday is a state holiday) until this directive is modified or rescinded.
F. Role of State Government

The California Emergency Service Act (Government Code (GC), Title 2, Division, Chapter 7, Section 8550 et seq.) confers upon the Governor and chief executives of political subdivisions of the state emergency powers to provide for state assistance in the organization and maintenance of emergency programs; establishes Office of Emergency Services; assigns functions to state agencies to be performed during an emergency and provides for coordination and direction of emergency actions of those agencies; and establishes mutual aid procedures. Authority for the creation of standby orders, crucial for preparedness, exists in GC section 8567. Authority to suspend statutes and agency rules exists in GC section 8671.

Department of Public Health

The CDPH is the lead state department for the state’s pandemic response. CDPH’s response to COVID-19 will comply with Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

CDPH will work closely with the California Emergency Medical Services Authority (CEMSA) in coordinating the medical response. CDPH has primary responsibility for activating the response at the level appropriate to the specific phase of a pandemic.

Throughout all phases of a pandemic event, the CDPH and/or the CEMSA will be responsible for the following:

- Coordinating statewide planning and providing recommendations for local public health and healthcare systems planning and response activities, including surge capacity issues.
- Coordinating statewide monitoring and investigation of illnesses and deaths caused by infectious agents.
- Communicating with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, state, local, tribal, and provincial health agencies.
- Providing laboratory facilities for identification and serving as liaison to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Coordinating any statewide distribution of vaccine or antiviral medication if they become available.
• Providing information for the public on communicable disease and safety precautions.
• Providing guidance for the safe operation of schools.

G. Role of Federal Government

The Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) is responsible for preventing the introduction, transmission, and spread of communicable diseases from foreign countries into the United States and within the United States and its territories/possessions (section 361 of the Public Health Service [PHS] Act).

Under its delegated authority, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is empowered to detain, medically examine, or conditionally release individuals reasonably believed to be carrying a communicable disease.
III. General Planning Assumptions

After delivering at-home or distance learning since March 16, 2020, in adherence with health orders aimed to slow the spread of COVID-19, San Mateo County schools and districts are planning and preparing various scenarios to reopen school campuses for in-person instruction. Following carefully developed plans that reflect the guidance of the Pandemic Recovery Framework, several schools began in-person learning during the fall of 2020. Others are developing plans they will implement once conditions meet their local requirements. All schools in the county are required to submit their plans to return students to campus for in-person instruction to SMCOE and SMCH for review.

Governor Newsom has repeatedly made it clear that, as long as public health data support it, he wants schools to open. The California Safe Schools for All Plan, announced on December 30, 2020, aims to help schools continue to return students and staff to campus safely for in-person learning and instruction.

Defining Reopening

The CDPH guidance released on January 14, 2021, specifies that a school must have given all students in at least one grade the option to return for in-person instruction for at least part of the school-week to be considered to “open” or “reopen.” This includes a school that has offered all students in at least one grade the option of receiving in-person instruction for only certain days during the week (commonly referred to as a “hybrid” model).

If a school is offering in-person instruction only for a particular subject or service (e.g., occupational therapy) or only for a particular student population (e.g., students with disabilities) before January 14, 2021, the school may continue serving the students in-person in the same way if the county shifts from Red Tier to Purple Tier. It may bring additional students back for in-person instruction and services while in Purple Tier only if the school site adheres to the Small Setting Guidance for those students.

In addition, if only some students were being served in-person in a school in a county in the Red Tier or lower (e.g., only students with disabilities) and all students in at least one grade did not have the option to return in-person as described above, the school has not “opened” or “reopened.” In such circumstances, if the school is located in a county that shifts to the Purple Tier, the school may continue serving the students in-person as it did while in the Red Tier, but it may not bring additional students back.
for in-person instruction and services, unless it adheres to the Small Setting Guidance for the students newly brought back in-person.

Schools must have actually reopened for in-person instruction, using the definition above, in order to remain open if the county moves back to Purple Tier. If a school was implementing a phased reopening (e.g., only opened grades 9–10 for in-person instruction with set plans to phase in grades 11 and 12), the school site may continue their phased reopening if the county reverts back to the Purple Tier, if authorized by local health officer. This is only applicable to individual school sites. If a school district has a phased reopening of their schools, the schools in that district that did not open for in-person instruction may not re-open until the county meets the reopening criteria below.

Requirements for Reopening

All LEAs must complete and post to their website homepages a COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP) prior to reopening for in-person instruction. LEAs with schools that have already reopened are required to post their CSPs by February 1, 2021. The CSP process is described below.

While San Mateo County remains in the Purple Tier, schools serving grades K–6 not already open may reopen when the adjusted case rate is 25 cases per 100,000 population per day or lower, though they may post and submit their CSP for review beforehand. For those schools serving grades 7–12 that have not reopened, San Mateo County must be in the Red Tier for 5 consecutive days before the school may reopen. They cannot reopen while the county is in the Purple Tier. Additionally, schools serving grades 7–12 may not reopen in jurisdictions with an adjusted case rate above 7 cases per 100,000 population per day, however, they may submit their CSP for review at any time.

COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP) Process

Schools in San Mateo County must develop a plan for how they will safely return students to campus for in-person learning. In addition, as of January 14, 2021, they are also required by the CDPH to assemble a COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP) comprised of two parts: (1) the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Program (CPP) and (2) the COVID-19 School Guidance Checklist. The CSP must be posted on their website’s homepage along with their Return to In-Person Learning Plan.

While developing a CSP, the CDPH strongly recommends that the LEA (or equivalent)
consult with labor, parent, and community organizations prior to posting. Examples of community organizations include school-based non-profit organizations and local organizations that support student enrichment, recreation, after-school programs, health services, early childhood services, or provide family support.

**Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Program (CPP)**

On January 1, 2021, Cal/OSHA’s Emergency Temporary Standards requiring employers to protect workers from hazards related to COVID-19 went into effect. The regulations require that employers, including schools, establish and implement a written CPP to address COVID-19 health hazards, correct unsafe or unhealthy conditions, and provide face coverings. LEAs can also create a written CPP by incorporating elements of this program into their existing Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP), if desired. The CPP must address the following:

- Communication to employees about the employer’s COVID-19 prevention procedures
- Identify, evaluate and correct COVID-19 hazards
- Physical distancing of at least six feet unless it is not possible
- Use of face coverings
- Use engineering controls, administrative controls and personal protective equipment as required to reduce transmission risk
- Procedures to investigate and respond to COVID-19 cases in the workplace
- Provide COVID-19 training to employees
- Provide testing to employees who are exposed to a COVID-19 case, and in the case of multiple infections or a major outbreak, implement regular workplace testing for employees in the exposed work areas
- Exclusion of COVID-19 cases and exposed employees from the workplace until they are no longer an infection risk
- Maintain records of COVID-19 cases and report serious illnesses and multiple cases to Cal/OSHA and the local health department, as required

**COVID-19 School Guidance Checklist**

As part of the CSP process, schools and districts must complete and post a COVID-19 School Guidance Checklist. If school staff are not represented by a labor organization,
then the applicant must describe the process by which it consulted with school staff.

Review Process

After the school or LEA publishes the CSP on their website’s homepage, they must send the link to their CSP and their Return to In-Person Learning Plan to the San Mateo County Office of Education to be reviewed by San Mateo County Health. If a school wishes to open in the Purple Tier, they must also send the link to their CSP and Return to In-Person Learning Plan to the State Safe Schools for All Team. The LEA must submit the CSP on behalf of all schools within their direct administrative authority, with site-specific precautions noted within the CSP to address considerations unique to specific school sites, as applicable. If a group of private, faith-based, or charter schools within a single county are subject to the same governing authority (e.g., an archdiocese, charter management organization, etc.), the governing authority may submit the CSP on behalf of those schools, but must address site-specific considerations.

If a school wishes to open in the Purple Tier, San Mateo County Health and the State Safe Schools for All Team have 7 business days to provide feedback to the LEA regarding deficiencies in the CSP. The school may reopen on the eighth business day after submitting the CSP if San Mateo County Health and/or State Safe Schools for All Team do not provide notification that the CSP is unsafe within 7 business days of submission. If San Mateo County Health and/or State Safe Schools for All Team identify any deficiencies during the 7-business-day review period, the school/district will receive feedback on what they need to improve in order to be able to reopen for in-person instruction. After the school/district responds to feedback and re-submits the plan, the entity that identified the deficiency will have 7 business days to review revisions. If San Mateo County Health has noted a deficiency in a submitted CSP and has required a response prior to opening for in-person instruction, San Mateo County Health must notify the State Safe Schools for All Team. The school may reopen on eighth business day after submitting the revisions if San Mateo County Health and the State Safe Schools for All Team do not provide additional feedback.

If a school wishes to open in the Red, Orange, or Yellow Tier, they must send the link to their CSP and Return to In-Person Learning Plan to the San Mateo County Office of Education to be reviewed by San Mateo County Health. There is no timeframe for when feedback must be given.
State Four-Tiered Color System for Monitoring

On August 28, 2020, Governor Newsom provided an updated direction about the reopening protocols for businesses. This system was not directly aimed at campus reopenings, but school decision-making was folded into the model.

This monitoring list narrows the metrics to two measures:

- Elevated Disease Transmission
  - Case rate per 100,000
  - Positivity rate

State’s Criteria for Closing a School Campus Once it is Open

The decision to close an individual school will be based on the number of cases in the school and the percentage of the teacher/students/staff who test positive for COVID-19. A school will make a decision to close following consultation with San Mateo County Health.

The closure of a school may be appropriate when an outbreak has occurred in 25 percent or more stable groups in the school. An outbreak is defined by the California Department of Public Health as at least three probable or confirmed COVID-19 cases within a 14-day period in people who are epidemiologically-linked in the setting, are from different households, and are not identified as close contacts of each other in any other case investigation. School closure may also be appropriate when at least three outbreaks have occurred in the school and more than five percent of the school population is infected over a 14-day period. San Mateo County Health may also determine whether school closure is warranted for other reasons, including results from a public health investigation or other local epidemiological data.

Once closed, a school may typically reopen after 14 days and the following have occurred:

- Cleaning and disinfection
- Public health investigation
- Consultation with San Mateo County Health

State’s Criteria for Closing School District Campuses Once Open

The superintendent should close a school district if 25 percent or more of the schools in the district have closed due to COVID-19 within 14 days. This decision should be
made in consultation with San Mateo County Health. The district may typically reopen after 14 days, but again, in consultation with San Mateo County Health.

Whether or not a school is open to on-campus learning, the Governor made it clear that the education of students is non-negotiable and schools would have to provide that education through whatever means available.

**A. The Four Pillars**

Until there is widespread vaccination in the community, San Mateo County schools must be organized around the Four Pillars, which include health and hygiene, face coverings, physical distancing, and limiting gatherings.

Licensed Child Care facilities have multiple regulatory agencies. Should guidelines differ, child care operators should follow the stricter guidance.

**Pillar One: Health and Hygiene Protocols**

Hygiene protocols are essential to avoiding the spread of disease and require careful planning, purchasing of supplies, and training of staff, students, parents, guardians, and families in order to implement effectively.

**Health and Hygiene Protocols:**

**Daily Hygiene Routines**

- Ensure campus signage and other messages reinforce daily hygiene routines and are widely posted, disseminated, and encouraged through various methods of communication.
- Post signs at each school entrance instructing students, families, and staff not to enter campus if they have any COVID-19 symptoms.
- Teach all students and staff to be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
• All members of the school community, students and staff alike, must stay at home if experiencing flu-like symptoms or fever.

• Students and staff should wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap frequently throughout the day, including before and after eating; after coughing or sneezing; after classes where they handle shared items, such as outside recreation, art, or shop; and before and after using the restroom.

• School staff must explicitly teach and frequently reinforce prevention behaviors of handwashing and cough/sneeze etiquette as important strategies in slowing the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

• Because washing with soap and water is preferred over hand sanitizers, consider investing in portable hand washing stations as necessary and strategically placing them around campus.

• Activate all hot water sinks in case they have been turned off. Use warm water for handwashing whenever possible. Although cold water is acceptable per CDC guidelines, it is less comfortable and may deter frequent handwashing.

• Provide ethyl alcohol–based no-touch hand sanitizer that is at least 60 percent ethyl alcohol in each classroom, in any other indoor space used by students or staff, at building entrances/exits, and at locations designated for students or staff to eat. Students under the age of 9 should use hand sanitizer only under adult supervision. If consumed, call Poison Control at 1–800–222–1222.

• Ethyl alcohol–based hand sanitizers are preferred and should be used when there is the potential of unsupervised use by children. Isopropyl hand sanitizers are more toxic when ingested or absorbed in skin. Do not use hand sanitizers that may contain methanol which can be hazardous when ingested or absorbed.

• Ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including tissues, soap, no-touch hand sanitizers for staff and students who can safely use it, no-touch trashcans, and face coverings.

• Teachers should build classroom routines for handwashing upon entering and leaving the classroom and create regular cleaning practices for desks, equipment, writing utensils, and other classroom materials.
• Minimize staff and student contact with high-touch surfaces (e.g., by propping open building or room doors, particularly at arrival and departure times).

• Provide incentives (e.g., classroom recognition or special responsibilities) for proper and thorough handwashing and other healthy practices to reinforce good hand hygiene. Consider adding recognition of safe and healthy hygiene practices within the school’s positive behavior and intervention (PBIS) matrix. Be sure to empower and involve students to help lead these efforts.

Check for Signs and Symptoms

• All students and staff should be screened for symptoms prior to entering the facility. Symptom screening can occur onsite or at home prior to arrival on campus.

• Prevent discrimination against students who (or whose families) were or are diagnosed with COVID–19 or who are perceived to be a COVID–19 risk.

• Actively encourage staff and students who are sick or who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID–19 to stay home. Develop policies that encourage sick staff and students to stay at home without fear of reprisal, and ensure staff, students, and students’ families are aware of these policies.

• Implement symptom and exposure screening for all staff and students at home each day before leaving for school.

• Provide parents with the list of COVID–19 symptoms and instruct them to keep their child at home if the child is feeling ill or has symptoms of COVID–19, even if symptoms are very mild, and to get their ill child tested for SARS-CoV2.

• Staff members be provided with the list of COVID–19 symptoms and be instructed to call in sick and stay home if having symptoms of COVID–19 and to get tested for SARS-CoV2.

• Note: If a student or staff member has chronic allergic or asthma symptoms (e.g., cough or runny nose), then a change in their symptoms from baseline would be considered a positive symptom.
There are several implementation options, each with benefits and challenges. Implementing a daily reminder system for home screening, such as a text message or through an online screening application, can support families and staff to review the symptom list each day before leaving for school and confirm that they do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and have not had close contact with a known case. This is likely the easiest and most effective approach, but families or staff may not all have technology access to support this. For those who do not, a list of screening questions on paper can be provided for daily review at home. Schools do not need to monitor compliance with home screening.

- If checking temperatures, use a no-touch thermometer.
- Ask all individuals if they or anyone in their home is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. See [San Mateo County Health guidance](#) for screening questions.
- Students and staff exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should not be allowed to enter the school campus.
- Document(track) incidents of possible exposure and notify staff and families immediately of any exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 at school while maintaining confidentiality, as required under FERPA and state law related to privacy of educational records.
- Staff and students should self-monitor throughout the day for signs of illness; staff should observe students for signs or symptoms of illness to support students who are less able to self-monitor or less likely to self-report.
- Any students or staff exhibiting one or more symptoms should be required to wait in an isolation area until they can be transported home or to a healthcare facility, as soon as practicable.
- If a student is exhibiting one or more symptoms of COVID-19, staff should communicate with the parent/caregiver and refer to the student’s health history form and/or emergency card.
- Advise staff members and students with symptoms of COVID-19 infection not to return for in-person instruction until they have met CDPH criteria to discontinue home isolation for those with symptoms:
At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and

Other symptoms have improved; and

They have a negative test for SARS-CoV-2 OR a healthcare provider has provided documentation that the symptoms are typical of their underlying chronic condition (e.g., allergies or asthma) OR a healthcare provider has confirmed an alternative named diagnosis (e.g., Streptococcal pharyngitis, Coxsackie virus) OR at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset.

Unless the San Mateo County Health recommends otherwise, there is no need to exclude asymptomatic contacts (students or staff) of the symptomatic individual from school until test results for the symptomatic individual are known.

Health and Hygiene Protocols: Temperature Taking

- Schools should implement policies and guidelines for health checks, including temperature taking for students, staff, and visitors. If performing on-campus temperature screening, it should be conducted using a contact-less thermometer.

- If employed on campus, screening stations should be set up at least six feet apart from each other.

- A physical barrier should be placed to separate the screener from individuals screened. If a barrier cannot be put in place, the person measuring temperatures should be trained and wear appropriate essential protective equipment (EPE) including a face mask, eye protection, and disposable gloves.

- Contact-less thermometers must be properly cleaned and disinfected according to the manufacturer’s recommendations.

- Consider using wristbands or other markers that students/staff may wear or display to designate that each person has completed the health screening at the start of each day.

- For students who use district-provided transportation, consider having a bus aide conduct temperature screenings when students load onto the bus at the
start of the day. This may be especially applicable and effective for students with special needs and would deter this more vulnerable population from entering the school environment while sick.

- Identify lead staff who can train others on proper health and hygiene techniques and provide support when questions arise.
- Any regularly employed staff may conduct temperature screenings according to district guidelines.
- Temperature data does not need to be recorded. If an individual registers a temperature reading outside the recommended range (above 100.4 degrees) that individual will be asked to go home.
- The school must maintain an isolation room for transitioning individuals from school to home.
- Develop a process to regularly conduct temperature checks for parent volunteers and all campus visitors, once they are allowed on campus.

Health and Hygiene Protocols: Essential Protective Equipment (EPE)

Through a partnership with the San Mateo County Schools Insurance Group (SMCSIG) and the County Office of Education (SMCOE), a bulk purchase of Essential Protective Equipment (EPE) for schools and districts in San Mateo County will ensure adequate supplies are available to safely begin in-person learning. Child care supplies are available through the 4Cs.

- Gloves play a minimal role in COVID-19 safety, except when conducting cleaning, handling food, or assisting with toileting. The CDC and San Mateo County Health strongly recommend handwashing as the most effective measure against the spread of COVID-19 over the routine use of gloves.
- EPE includes face coverings, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, gloves for specific activities, standards-based cleaning materials, and for staff working with special populations, disposable gowns and face shields.
- Classrooms and office spaces must be supplied with wastebaskets, tissues, and CDC-approved sanitizer.
Health and Hygiene Protocols: Cleaning and Disinfecting

Frequent disinfection, which was thought at the beginning of the pandemic to be a key safety component, can pose a health risk to children and students due to the chemicals used and has proven to have limited to no impact on COVID-19 transmission. Disinfection with specified products is recommended for schools after a case has been identified, in spaces where the case spent a large proportion of their time, however, it is not recommended when students are present. It is more important that schools reinforce the Four Pillars, particularly face coverings, physical distancing, limited gathering, and other health and hygiene protocols in order to reduce transmission.

- Develop an explicit and detailed cleaning and disinfecting plan that includes a regular schedule for high traffic areas.
- When performing cleaning duties, custodial staff should follow CDC guidance on the use of face coverings and other safety equipment.
- When disinfecting, air out the space before students arrive; disinfection should be done when students are not present.
- Trained custodial staff should clean frequently-touched surfaces at school and on school buses at least daily and more often, as practicable. Frequently touched surfaces in the school include, but are not limited to:
  - Door handles
  - Light switches
  - Sink handles
  - Bathroom surfaces
  - Tables
  - Student Desks
  - Chairs
- If used, outdoor playgrounds/natural play areas only need routine maintenance. Make sure that children wash or sanitize their hands before and after using these spaces. When hand hygiene is emphasized, cleaning of outdoor structures play is not required between groups.
- Provide training to all staff on when and how to properly clean and disinfect their classrooms and workspaces. Consider deploying county, district, or school nurses to assist with training.
• To reduce the risk of asthma and other health effects related to disinfecting, programs should select disinfectant products on list N with asthma-safer ingredients (hydrogen peroxide, citric acid or lactic acid) as recommended by the US EPA Design for Environment program.

• Avoid products that contain peroxyacetic (peracetic) acid, sodium hypochlorite (bleach) or quaternary ammonium compounds, which can cause asthma.

• Follow label directions for appropriate dilution rates and contact times. Provide workers training on the chemical hazards, manufacturer’s directions, Cal/OSHA requirements for safe use, as applicable and required by the Healthy Schools Act.

• Consider the assignment of restrooms to specific classes and/or using procedures to indicate when a restroom/stall is clean or if it has been used since the last cleaning (e.g. use of red/green signs to indicate clean or dirty).

• Ensure proper ventilation during cleaning and disinfecting. Introduce fresh outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows where practicable. If using air conditioning, use the setting that brings in fresh air. Periodically replace and check air filters and filtration systems to ensure optimal air quality.

• Ensure a safe and correct application of disinfectants using EPE and ventilation recommended for cleaning. Keep disinfectant products away from students.

• Custodial staff and any other workers who clean and disinfect the school site must be equipped with proper personal protective equipment, including gloves, eye protection, respiratory protection, and other appropriate protective equipment as required by the product instructions. All products must be kept out of the reach of children and stored in a space with restricted access.

• Establish a cleaning schedule in order to avoid both under- and over-use of cleaning products.

• Refer to the Cleaning & Disinfection Procedures Manual prepared for the San Mateo County Pandemic Recovery Framework for Schools by Professional
Service Industries, Inc. and the San Mateo County Schools Insurance Group (SMCSIG).

- Check CDC guidance about cleaning and disinfection after persons suspected/confirmed with COVID-19 have been in the facility.

**Health and Hygiene Protocols: Indoor Ventilation**

- If the school facility is equipped with an HVAC system, begin each school term by installing new air filters.

- Open doors and/or windows when outside climate allows, but keep doors in locked position to quickly close and secure in the event of a security alert. Cross ventilation of outside air helps maintain a healthy environment.

- Consider using supplemental fans or portable air filters in classrooms to maintain healthy airflow and air quality.

- Use air conditioning to keep rooms comfortable.

- If opening windows poses a safety or health risk (e.g., allowing pollen in or exacerbating asthma symptoms) to persons using the facility, consider alternatives. For example, maximize central air filtration for HVAC systems (targeted filter rating of at least MERV 13).

- Maximizing outside airflow is the simplest and most efficient way to maintain a healthy classroom environment.

**When Outdoor Air Quality is Poor**

- If outside air quality is poor, doors and windows should be shut. Schools holding classes outside should be relocated inside.

- If the HVAC filter was upgraded (HEPA or MERV-13 or higher is recommended), set the central system’s circulating fan to operate continuously (set to “ON” rather than “AUTO”). HVAC, air conditioning wall units, and fans without upgraded filters should be turned off.

- Use a portable air cleaner in one or more rooms. Portable air cleaners work best when run continuously with doors and windows closed.

- When air quality improves, even temporarily, “air out” buildings to reduce indoor air pollution.
Damp mop, dust, and clean with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter-equipped vacuum.

School site may consider student dismissal and begin distance learning until air quality improves and proper ventilation on indoor classrooms/common areas can resume.

For resources and guidance on air quality, visit the San Mateo County Office of Education’s Air Quality Resources page.

Health and Hygiene: Limit Sharing of Material and Equipment

- Suspend or modify the use of site resources that necessitate sharing or touching items. For example, suspend the use of drinking fountains and instead encourage the use of reusable water bottles.
- Limit the use of shared playground equipment in favor of physical activities that require less contact with surfaces.
- Limit sharing of objects and equipment, such as toys, games, and art supplies to the extent practicable. But where allowed, clean and disinfect between uses.

Pillar Two: Face Coverings

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and San Mateo County Health (SMCH) state that wearing a face covering, when combined with physical distancing of at least six feet and frequent handwashing, significantly reduces the risk of transmitting coronavirus when in public.

The State requires a face covering to be worn by those age two and older when outside of the home, with some exceptions. A face shield is an acceptable alternative for children in this age group who cannot wear a face covering properly.

Per San Mateo County’s Health Officer, a Face Covering means a covering made of cloth, fabric, or other soft or permeable material, without holes, that covers only the nose and mouth and surrounding areas of the lower face. A face covering should be considered essential clothing that is laundered at home by hand or machine washed and worn to school each day.

Face Coverings: School Practices

- According to the CDPH, the following individuals are exempt from wearing a face covering at all times:
○ Persons younger than two years old. These very young children must not wear a face covering because of the risk of suffocation.

○ Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance. Such conditions are rare.

○ Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.

○ Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.

○ **Note:** Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition who are employed in a job involving regular contact with others must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it.

- According to the CDPH, individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings in the following specific settings:

  ○ Persons who are working in an office or in a room alone.

  ○ Persons who are actively eating or drinking provided that they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet away from persons who are not members of the same household or residence.

  ○ Persons who are outdoors and maintaining at least six feet of social distancing from others not in their household. Such persons must have a face covering with them at all times and must put it on if they are within six feet of others who are not in their household.

  ○ Persons who are obtaining a service involving the nose or face for which temporary removal of the face covering is necessary to perform the service.

  ○ Workers who are required to wear respiratory protection.

  ○ Persons who are specifically exempted from wearing face coverings by other CDPH guidance.
Additional Guidance for Face Coverings in Schools

- Staff should not assume that students cannot wear face coverings, but rather model and teach students about the proper wearing of a face covering. Schools should post signage to reinforce this training.

- If a student cannot wear a face covering or face shield, staff working closely with the student will wear a face covering and a face shield.

- A cloth face covering or face shield should be removed for meals, snacks, naptime, or outdoor recreation, or when it needs to be replaced. When a cloth face covering is temporarily removed, it should be placed in a clean paper bag (marked with the student’s name and date) until it needs to be put on again.

- In order to comply with this guidance, schools must exclude students from campus if they are not exempt from wearing a face covering under CDPH guidelines and refuse to wear one.

- Schools should develop protocols to provide a face covering to students who inadvertently fail to bring one to school to prevent unnecessary exclusions. Schools should offer alternative educational opportunities for students who are excluded from campus.

- All staff must use face coverings in accordance with CDPH guidelines unless Cal/OSHA standards require respiratory protection.

- For staff who come into routine contact with others, CDPH recommends the use of disposable 3-ply surgical masks, which are more effective than cloth face coverings.

- In limited situations where a face covering cannot be used for pedagogical or developmental reasons (i.e. communicating or assisting young children or those with special needs), a face shield can be used instead of a cloth face covering while in the classroom as long as the wearer maintains physical distance from others, to the extent practicable. The shield should include a cloth drape attached across the bottom and tucked into the shirt. Staff must return to wearing a face covering outside of the classroom.

- Staff who work in close proximity with students whose special needs require
feeding, toileting, and performing nebulizer treatments are recommended to wear a face shield for additional protection.

- Teachers are encouraged to develop activities and classroom protocols to help students understand the rationale for wearing face coverings and to develop classroom culture that supports face coverings.

- For instructional purposes, teachers may work with students side by side as necessary, with both student and teacher wearing a face covering. In the event a student is unable to wear a face covering, the teacher or staff should wear both a face covering and a face shield.

- Microphone systems are available to assist teachers and staff who wear a face covering in the classroom while teaching. See here for a sample system.

- Participants in youth and adult sports should wear face coverings when participating in the activity, even with heavy exertion as tolerated, both indoors and outdoors.

- Information contained in the CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings should be provided to staff and families. The document addresses the circumstances in which face coverings must be worn and the exemptions, as well as any policies, work rules, and practices the employer has adopted to ensure the use of face coverings.

Some staff members may not “believe” in the efficacy of face coverings to slow the spread and may resist wearing them. Likewise, some students may struggle acclimating to a face covering and become overly distracted as a result. Despite these factors, the State requires the wearing of face coverings for those age two and older, and there is widely accepted research that wearing a face covering is highly effective in reducing community spread of COVID–19.

Atul Gawande, a surgeon and public health researcher, reported in The New Yorker that, “an extensive review of the research from an international consortium of scientists suggests that if at least sixty per cent of the population wore masks that were just sixty−per−cent effective in blocking viral transmission—which a well−fitting, two−layer cotton mask is—the epidemic could be stopped. The more effective the mask, the bigger the impact.”
Pillar Three: Physical Distancing

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Physical Distancing is one of the most effective tools to avoid exposure to the COVID-19 virus and slow its spread. Proper physical distancing requires people to stay at least six feet (or two arms’ length) away from other people, avoid gathering in groups, and stay out of crowded places. Accomplishing physical distancing in a school requires a number of planning assumptions that must be addressed in the return to school plan. These assumptions include:

- Physical distancing reduces the number of in-person contacts per teacher and is an essential practice in ensuring a safe school environment.
- All activities, instructional or otherwise, must support physical distancing and be implemented across the campus at all times.
- Students should remain in the same space and in groups as small and consistent as feasible, including for recess and lunch.
- Limit face-to-face interactions between groups, including face-to-face interactions between staff assigned to different groups.
- Do not combine groups of students for activities. Stagger use of shared spaces, properly space occupants, and clean in between uses.
- This Framework provides a continuum of instructional strategies to support the most effective educational program for students and staff while following physical distancing guidance.
- School planning teams should identify all locations and times of day where students are in close contact and develop strategies to reorganize those locations and activities to maintain at least six feet of distance between everyone on campus. School modifications may include altering bell schedules, staggering start times, implementing a block schedule, creating multiple recess and lunch periods, and creating multiple meal distribution points to reduce student movement during the day and cross contamination of classrooms.
- Preschoolers and early elementary grade students will need extra support to learn and follow physical distancing protocols.
Consider assigning restrooms to specific classes in alignment with campus layout.

If applicable, instruct drivers dropping-off or picking-up students to remain in their vehicles to the extent possible.

**Physical Distancing: Small Setting Guidance**

The CDPH’s small setting guidance provides for a smaller group of young children or students (up to 14), plus up to two supervising adults, to exist within a defined location with no mixing between any other groups when schools are closed to in-person instruction and learning. Teachers and staff must remain solely with their group, and if a child is absent, their space may not be filled by another child new to the group. An additional staff member certified to serve as a substitute can be included as part of the group. However, the total number in the group may not exceed 16.

**Stable Group**

A stable group is a group with fixed membership that stays together without mixing with any other groups for any activities.

Implementing stable groups of students and staff reduces the numbers of exposed individuals if COVID-19 is introduced into the group, decreases opportunities for exposure to or transmission of the virus; facilitates more efficient contact tracing in the event of a positive case; and allows for targeted testing and quarantine of a small group instead of potential schoolwide closures in the event of a positive case or cluster of cases.

An elementary school can create stable groups through the following measures:

- Students can be placed into stable groups that stay together all day with their core teacher (and any aide or student teacher who is present). If there are counselors or teachers of electives, they should ideally be assigned to only one group or conduct their classes/counseling virtually.
- Students should eat lunch and go to recess with their group at times that are staggered and separated from other groups.
- There are different approaches to organizing stable groups. Students can be divided into smaller groups that attend school in person on a rotating schedule. Here are a few examples:
General Planning Assumptions

- A group of students comes to school for in-person instruction on Monday and Tuesday. Another attends on Thursday and Friday. On the alternating days, they learn remotely.
- Some LEAs or schools have students attend school in-person during alternating weeks.
- Other LEAs or schools have one group of students attend school in person in the morning and another group attend school in person in the afternoon.

These approaches create even smaller groups that stay together and do not mix with one another. Electives or counseling can be conducted virtually to limit the number of staff in direct contact with any given stable group.

The California Department of Public Health and San Mateo County Health recognize the differences between elementary schools and middle and high schools that make it difficult to implement stable groups in older grades. The key idea is to reduce mixing and interactions while on campus as much as possible. A middle or high school can minimize interactions between groups through the following measures:

- Students can be placed into groups that remain together all day during in-person instruction.
- The CDC guidance notes that schools may keep a single group together in one classroom and have educators rotate between groups, or have smaller groups move together in staggered passing schedules to other rooms they need to use (e.g., science labs) without allowing students or staff to mix with others from distinctive groups.
- Teachers and supports staff from different content areas can work in teams that share students, preferably in a dedicated space, separate from others. For example: math, science, English, and history teachers might work as a team with a set group of students they share.
- When combined with block schedules that reduce the number of courses students take in any one day, the number of educators and students who interact can be minimized further.
- It is also possible to keep students in one stable group that stays together with one or two instructors who teach them directly part of the day and support...
their instruction from others who teach them virtually during other parts of the day.

- Electives can be offered virtually or organized so that no group of students takes more than one elective in a term and the elective teachers do not work with more than one or two groups.

- Stable groups could switch schedules or even membership after a break at the quarter, trimester, or semester in ways that support students being able to take additional classes without substantial group mixing.

- The school year can be divided into even smaller time units – 4 to 8 weeks for example – in which students study one or two subjects intensively, completing all of the work they might normally have completed in a semester or a year. They stay in stable groups with only 1 or 2 teachers during this time. At the end of unit, they switch schedules and groups to take 1 or 2 other courses, and so on throughout the year.

Other considerations are as follows.

- **Schedule for Access and Inclusion**: The construction of stable groups can increase or decrease equity or segregation across the school campus, so consider how to support inclusion and access for all student populations as you organize students for learning.

- **Schedules as Tools for Physical Distancing**: To the extent possible, schools should think about how to reconfigure the use of bell schedules to streamline foot traffic and maintain practicable physical distancing during passing times and at the beginning and end of the school day. Create staggered passing times when students must move between rooms minimize congregated movement through hallways as much as is practicable.

- **Restructure Electives**: Elective teachers who move in and out of stable groups can become points of exposure for themselves and the students they work with. Some models have made elective teachers part of middle and high school stable groups, while others have used them only for remote instruction. Other options include ensuring elective teachers maintain longer distance from students (e.g., 12 feet).
Physical Distancing: Review and Restructure Activities

As COVID-19 remains a concern to our community, activities will need to be restructured to provide for physical distancing and minimizing the use of shared objects. A methodical approach to identifying and evaluating these activities in advance is required and should address the following:

- Establish the criteria that will be used to evaluate and restructure activities, including those before, after, and during school hours.
- Analyze all aspects (athletic practices, locker rooms, transportation, contests/performances) of each program to determine where/when physical distancing will be a problem.
- Where possible, develop adaptations to include physical distancing.
- Consider marking off designated space for the teacher in the classroom and do not allow students in this teacher area.
- When necessary, develop alternative practices and contests using components of the original activity.
- Where possible, consider virtual contests/performances as an alternative to events that require travel.
- Consider adding digital or electronic extracurricular programs to engage more students.

Physical Distancing: Logistical Considerations

- Lower the student/teacher ratio as much as possible.
- Use floor markings or visual cues to demonstrate physical spacing.
- Consider closing off common spaces like the library, technology lab, or cafeteria, or developing a cleaning protocol between rotating classes.
- Organize common areas for staff gathering that meet physical distancing guidelines.
- Minimize movement of students and teachers or staff as much as practicable. For example, consider ways to keep teachers with one group of students for the whole day. In secondary schools or in situations where students have
individualized schedules, plan for ways to reduce mixing among groups and to minimize contact.

- Prioritize the use and maximization of outdoor space for activities where practicable.
- Use multiple entrances into the school to avoid crowding at a single point of entry.
- Consider delivering meals to classrooms or to designated outdoor areas on campus for each class where students will be eating in order to reduce mixing of students.
- Consider using privacy boards or clear screens.
- Implement procedures for turning in assignments that minimize contact.

**Pillar Four: Limiting Gatherings**

Because COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person, it is essential to limit gatherings of people. Note, the instruction of students at school is not considered a gathering. The following are considerations for limiting and/or finding alternatives to gatherings.

- Consider ways that technology can be utilized to support drama, music, and other performance-based activities.
- Limit communal activities. Alternatively, stagger use, properly space occupants, and clean in between uses.
- Plan for staff and other meetings to be held remotely.
- Until a vaccine is introduced, large-scale events that bring together crowds of people will not be possible.
- Establish policies for extracurricular and athletic activities that follow the step-by-step approach to allowing close-contact sports, equipment sterilization, and the allowance of spectators based on CDC and local health department guidance and the determinations of state agencies like the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF).
• Limit Physical Education to noncontact activities that do not require shared equipment and can be conducted with recommended physical distancing.

Four Pillars and Outside Organizations

Evaluate whether and to what extent external community organizations can safely utilize the site and campus resources. Ensure external community organizations that use the facilities also follow this guidance.

B. A Step-by-Step Approach

Incremental implementation of the district’s return-to-school plan is well supported by examples from schools in countries whose society opened after stay at home restrictions as well as our own county and state. This step-by-step approach provides a careful implementation for returning students and staff and enables schools to be nimble in responding to current and changing conditions. In cooperation with San Mateo County Health, school operations will be informed by public health data applicable to both the school community and the county.

Three Steps:

To ensure smooth implementation of the Four Pillars on each school campus, schools will use an incremental approach to guide their return-to-campus process. Each school site administrator will lead their school community through the incremental progression of the steps outlined below based on local school and district conditions.

Ideally, each step should be fully implemented for a minimum of three weeks before any consideration of advancing the school community to the next one. In determining a move forward to the next step, school leaders should apply the statewide indicators as practicable and consult with the County Superintendent and county health authorities as needed. Additionally, implementation of the Pandemic Recovery Framework and the Four Pillars should be smooth and consistent across the entire school or district before advancing to the next step.

The step-by-step approach provides clear boundaries that schools may need to step back to in the event of an outbreak within the school community or more restrictive health orders countywide. Districts are encouraged to develop a district-wide protocol to guide site leaders in their decision-making and public communication.

The conditions informing this decision-making for each step include:
Step One (Minimum of three weeks)

- Plan to return only a subset of students, prioritizing those with the greatest need to be back on campus. For example, schools might bring back a quarter of students in each grade or students in TK-1st grade.
- To maintain small groups, it may also be necessary to bring back this subset of students on different days of the week. For example, half of the students come to school on Monday and Tuesday and the other half on Wednesday and Thursday, leaving Friday for distance learning.
- Allow no on-campus visitors including volunteers; parents who support direct instruction in preschool classrooms are exempt.
- Limit on-campus extracurricular activities unless this is the only way some students are able to engage with others in person.
- Pause all gatherings (a gathering is any meeting or social activity outside of classroom instruction or important student activities that includes more than four people).
- Convene all meetings remotely.
- Reinforce the wearing of face coverings by staff, students, and any others who enter the campus.

Step Two (Minimum of three weeks)

- The school community has successfully implemented the Four Pillars and all associated modifications intended to reduce the spread of the virus for a minimum of three weeks with no or only sporadic and isolated cases.
- Bring back additional grades and/or students in each grade.
- Open the campus only to visitors and volunteers who directly support instruction with expectations that all will honor the Four Pillars.
- Restrict extracurricular activities to those that support student mental health, social emotional development, or instruction, with expectations that any in-person activities will honor the Four Pillars.
- Restrict gatherings to ensure that at least six feet of physical distance can be maintained at all times.
- Convene most meetings remotely, specifically any that include groups larger than ten.
Step Three: (Minimum of three weeks)

- The school community has successfully implemented the Four Pillars and all associated modifications intended to reduce the spread of the virus for a minimum of three weeks with no or only sporadic and isolated cases.
- Continue to bring back students as practicable following the Four Pillars.
- Allow volunteers and visitors on campus with strict adherence to the Four Pillars.
- Restrict instructional and interest-based extracurricular activities to those that can be implemented with small groups who can physically distance.

This step-by-step approach requires patience and discipline from all members of the school community. Even though schools will follow an incremental approach to returning students and staff to campus, they will need to continue to follow the Four Pillars, likely for the duration of the school year. Although schools typically provide much more than academic instruction, including social and emotional support, interest-based activities, sports, and youth leadership opportunities, the primary goal of students returning to school for in-person learning for the 2020–21 school year is to maximize instructional time and provide the highest quality academic intervention that supports the educational success of all students.

C. Testing and Contact Tracing

Schools are not expected nor allowed to diagnose or treat students or staff for any medical condition, including COVID-19. Local health officials will provide guidance and support to individuals within a school community who test positive for COVID-19. However, schools have an important role to play in conducting surveillance testing and contact tracing. While local health officials will conduct contact tracing in the larger community to help identify individuals who may have been in close contact with a confirmed case, schools will need to identify close contacts in the school setting.

Definitions

There are several circumstances under which a student or staff member might undergo testing.

- **Symptomatic testing**: This testing is used for individuals with symptoms of COVID-19, either at home or at school. In this situation, the school guidance...
requires that these individuals stay home in case they are infectious and encourages them to seek testing.

- **Response testing**: This testing is used to identify positive individuals once a case has been identified in a given stable group. Response-based testing can be provided for symptomatic individuals or for asymptomatic individuals with known or suspected exposure to an individual infected with SARS-CoV-2.

- **Asymptomatic testing**: This testing can be used for surveillance, usually at a cadence of every two weeks or less. Asymptomatic testing helps to identify whether schools have higher or lower rates of COVID-19 rates than the community, guide decisions about safety for schools and school administrators, and inform health departments about district level in–school rates. Asymptomatic testing can also be used for screening to identify asymptomatic or pre–symptomatic cases to exclude cases that might otherwise contribute to in–school transmission. Screening testing is indicated for situations associated with higher risk (higher community transmission, individuals at higher risk of transmission (e.g., adults and high school students transmit more effectively than elementary aged students).

**Ongoing Testing in Schools**

According to guidance provided by the California Department of Public Health on August 3, 2020, school staff should be tested, including teachers, paraprofessionals, cafeteria workers, janitors, bus drivers, or any other school employee that may have contact with students or other staff. School districts and schools should ensure that staff are tested periodically by their primary care provider or by referring teachers to a community testing site, or by contracting with a provider who can serve the school or district. San Mateo County Health recommends that staff be tested at least once a month. As testing becomes more available, schools have explored options for testing students.

Any school currently open is subject to the minimum testing requirement standards established by Cal/OSHA. These standards include response testing for exposed cases and outbreak testing for everyone weekly until no longer considered an outbreak.

When a school or school district reopens to in–person instruction, but the county is later placed in the Widespread (Purple) Tier or if epidemiological data indicates concern
for widespread or increasing community transmission, schools should increase testing of staff to detect potential cases. The schools are not required to close under this scenario.

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TP = test positivity

* The case rates above are adjusted case rates.

** Weekly asymptomatic testing assumes the use of a PCR test. If antigen testing is used, testing should be at a twice weekly cadence.

Case, Close Contact, Indirect Contact

To understand the continuum of health concern for members of the public regarding the contracting of COVID–19, the Pandemic Recovery Framework uses the terms Case, Close Contact, and Indirect Contact to mean the following within a pandemic context:

- Case: A Case refers to a person who tests positive
• Close Contact: A Close Contact refers to a person who is within 6 feet of a confirmed case for more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, regardless of face covering use.

• Indirect Contact: Indirect Contacts are people who may have been in proximity to a Close Contact

According to Cal/OSHA’s Emergency Temporary Standards guidance, if a case is on campus while they were infectious, anyone in the building needs to be notified of the potential exposure, including contractors, in addition to labor organization representatives and the school community. No communication is needed if the exposure did not happen in a school setting.

In addition, schools must offer COVID-19 testing (response testing) at no cost during work hours and disclose benefits for staff. If there is an outbreak, any school currently open must offer response testing for exposed cases and outbreak testing for everyone weekly until it is no longer considered an outbreak.

According to San Mateo County Health following the release of CDPH’s January 14 guidance, if a student or staff member is identified as a close contact with a confirmed case, the school must exclude close contacts (possibly the entire stable group) from school for 14 days after the last date the case was present at school while infectious. Quarantine for close contacts may be shortened to 10 days with or without testing or 7 days with testing, depending on the situation:

• The Close Contact, or parent/guardian in the case of a student, can determine whether the longer quarantine poses a hardship.

• The school or district may also determine that the longer quarantine poses a hardship because of its impact on staffing, student learning, and/or school operations.

See San Mateo County Health’s website for additional information and scenarios for responding to cases and close contacts in the school community.

Communication Structure
The communication structure in the Appendix has been developed with San Mateo
County Health to manage communication between schools and the health department concerning cases of COVID-19 in school communities.

When either a school or San Mateo County Health is aware that an outbreak may be underway, San Mateo County Health should investigate, in collaboration with the school, to determine whether these cases had a common exposure at school (e.g., a common class or staff member, bus ride, or other common exposures outside of school). It is recommended that investigations determine whether there is adherence to key mitigation strategies to prevent school transmission. If gaps are identified, schools should take steps to strengthen strategies to prevent future outbreaks.

**D. Health and Safety Considerations for Staff**

Although evidence indicates that children and young adults have less risk of COVID-19 infection, there remains some measure of risk to adults who return to work and the community. In order to ensure the safest working environment possible for school employees, collaboration with employee associations is critical. Training should be provided to all staff so that safe practices are implemented for all school employees, including custodians, school nurses and health aides, food service workers, support staff, paraeducators, bus drivers, teachers, administrators, and others.

Additionally, expect partner agencies such as bus vendors to be able to produce documents outlining their cleaning/disinfecting protocols and screening of drivers.

The San Mateo County Pandemic Recovery Framework identifies safe conditions for reopening schools and offers example scenarios for how schools can provide a continuum of learning models to meet student learning needs and leverage staff skills. Additionally, the Framework reflects health conditions as understood and determined by state and local health officials and is clear on the hygiene measures necessary for keeping children, students, and staff as safe and healthy as possible. The Framework describes the necessary Essential Protective Equipment (EPE) as recommended by CDC and local health officials and clarifies the implementation of procedures across the campus and throughout the school day.

**Guiding Questions for Staff Collaboration and Planning**

- What support and training will be available to guide how teachers maintain classroom cleanliness throughout school day?
• Considering schools are likely to develop hybrid instructional models including distance learning at scale, how might teachers uniquely engage learners—calling students by phone, sending tutorial videos, and allowing students to demonstrate understanding of content through varied methods?

• How will the availability of local testing play a role in strengthening employee confidence about their own personal health status?

• Under what conditions might California Government Code, Sections 3100–3109, be invoked directing public employees to serve as Disaster Services Workers “subject to such disaster service activities as may be assigned to them by their superiors or by law?”

• Will the school provide teachers and staff with timely, factual information regarding safe work conditions through training provided by district nurses, county office of education staff, or through resources provided by San Mateo County Schools Insurance Group (SMCSIG)?

• Consider having site administrators consult district or county nursing staff to develop and implement procedures to send sick persons home from school, including notifying the individuals with whom the ill employee had contact and ensuring cleaning and disinfecting areas used by the ill employee.

• Will site administrators develop a flowchart that clearly maps the accommodation procedures in the event an employee does not want to leave home isolation?

• How will the community impact of COVID-19 influence staff shortages, employee absences, resignations, retirements, and needs for increased wellness and mental health services?

• What process will be used to determine how employees working remotely are assigned?

• How will the school plan for “Specialist” teachers who work with groups of students in subjects such as art, music, library, and PE, etc., to interact or instruct students in outdoor settings or through remote instruction?

• How will the school plan for support and intervention teachers, such as reading specialists, physical therapists, speech therapists, etc., to work with
individual students in outdoor spaces? Or, if they must be indoors, plan for them to provide instruction from behind a plexiglass barrier and wear a face covering unless it interferes with teaching and learning.

- Who will serve as the COVID-19 staff liaison or liaisons to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns? Employees should know who they are and how to contact them. The liaison should be trained to coordinate the documentation and tracking of possible exposure, in order to notify local health officials, staff, and families in a prompt and responsible manner.

E. Travel by Employees and Students

The Appendix includes more detailed information on addressing travel by employees, students, and members of their respective households. Here are a few key things to consider concerning travel:

- Although school districts can strongly encourage students to be tested when they return from travel, there is no legal authority permitting a district to exclude a student from attendance for traveling or refusing to participate in COVID-19 testing upon return from travel.

- Employers may require employees to disclose any travel plans or recent travel and remind employees of CDC recommendations regarding travel.

- Employers can test employees who are returning from travel even if it isn’t their “turn” yet according to the school site’s testing strategy. However, the CDC notes that COVID-19 symptoms can appear 2–14 days after exposure, and an individual may test negative prior to developing symptoms. Recent guidance from the CDC discourages a test–based strategy and encourages a symptom–based screening strategy to identify when an individual with symptoms can return to work.

See the Appendix for more detailed information on travel.
IV. District Planning Considerations

School district leaders will plan, coordinate, and lead the local district process to launch a safe and smooth opening to the 2020–21 school year. These considerations address attendance, nutrition services, transportation, and other key steps for safely and smoothly reopening schools.

A. Attendance

- According to the recently released budget legislation in SB98, accountability for meeting daily instructional minutes can be met in any combination of in-person, live synchronous, and independent asynchronous work.

- Per Education Code 3501, for the 2020–21 school year, the minimum school day for a local educational agency is as follows:
  (a) 180 instructional minutes in kindergarten.
  (b) 230 instructional minutes in grades 1 to 3, inclusive.
  (c) 240 instructional minutes in grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
  (d, e, f) 180 for special dual enrollments.

- Districts need a written plan for re-engagement for students who are absent from distance learning for more than 3 days in a week.

- Some parents may choose to keep their students at home and participate in distance learning programs, as it is perceived as a safer and more stable alternative to classroom-based instruction while COVID-19 is in circulation.

- In an effort to serve all students, schools may choose to offer a continuum of learning options that includes on-campus instruction, at-home learning, or a hybrid of both.

- Depending on the learning models adopted in the school, district administrators should assess, update, and communicate any student enrollment or attendance policy changes.

- Students and staff who become infected with COVID-19 and those who are directly exposed may miss two or more weeks of school during the required quarantine and recovery. In some households, children may miss school for an extended period if the virus spreads through the family household.
• Temporary employees, including substitutes, may be in more demand as employee absences rise. It is important these staff members receive training in school mitigation strategies and health protocols.

**B. Nutrition Services**

• School nutrition programs will be needed by more students and will represent a more significant portion of their food intake.

• Accommodations to provide continued access to meals for children who are ill or required to self-isolate may be necessary if COVID-19 is uncontrolled.

• If shelter-in-place orders are in place, consider using bus services or other district transportation resources to provide meals if deemed necessary.

**C. Transportation**

• Under the restricted conditions necessitated by physical distancing, SamTrans will be limited in its ability to provide school transportation during the 2020–2021 school year.

• Under these restricted conditions, there may be more expectations on parents to transport their students to school.

• Ridership on school district bus transportation should be organized around the concept of a Stable Group. Assign seats for prescribed riders, placing siblings in close proximity.

• Maximize space between students and between students and the driver on school buses and open windows to the greatest extent practicable.

• Two windows on a bus should be opened fully at a minimum.

• Ensure each school bus is equipped with extra unused face coverings for students who may have inadvertently failed to bring one.

• Require health and hygiene procedures prior to entering the bus, implementing physical distancing as much as is practicable.

• Face coverings are required for the bus driver and all students except those who are exempt.

• Bus drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, cloth face coverings).
To clean and disinfect school buses or other transport vehicles, see the CDC’s guidance for bus transit operators.

Further information about student safety and health on public or school bus transportation may be available through the recovery planning process conducted by San Mateo County and IEM Consultants.

Buses should be thoroughly cleaned daily and after transporting any individual who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.

School districts can encourage families and students who live within one-half mile of school to walk or bike to and from school.

Ensure each bus is equipped with extra unused face coverings for students who may have forgotten to bring one.

The SMCOE Safe Routes to School program has resources and support available to help schools in promoting and encouraging safe walking/rolling to school practices, such as implementing a Walking School Bus.

**D. District Actions**

School district leaders will plan, coordinate, and lead the local district process to launch a safe and smooth opening to the 2020–21 school year.

**District Actions: Do First**

- Launch a Return to School Committee and name a leader who is ultimately responsible for the outcome.

- The Return to School Committee should include staff who have oversight of the essential operations of the district including curriculum and instruction, facilities, human resources, technology, student services, business, preschool if relevant, and student health and wellness, as well as a representative from each school in the district.

- Meaningfully involve students and parents in the Return to School planning:
  - conduct virtual focus group meetings and/or surveys to better understand needs and concerns and to provide ongoing input
  - incorporate strategies to query all parents on family needs and then schedule students accordingly
District Planning Considerations

- strive to keep siblings on the same attendance schedule
- be sensitive to childcare and transportation needs
- work closely with bus service provider and consider providing communication support in order to build trust with families
- empower and engage youth in problem solving and prevention work

- Designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns (e.g., school nurse). All school staff and families should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Develop plans to restore operations in phases that align with health conditions and orders. Returning to full operations will require careful identification of all activities typical of a regular school program and the order in which they should be implemented. Create timelines and communications plans to support each phase.
- Articulate a vision reflecting the district’s core values and community needs and communicate this vision with all district stakeholders.
- Define and assign roles and responsibilities of Return to School Committee members. This may include creating subcommittees to address various operations.
- Assess how external partners can best support the Return to School plan and develop strategies for collaboration and securing additional funding.

District Actions: Do Before School Opens

- Establish/reestablish a district-level Pandemic Response Committee and name a leader who is ultimately responsible for outcomes.
  - The Pandemic Response Committee should include representative stakeholders, such as administrators, teachers, parents, and subject matter experts, and leaders of on-site childcare, preschool, and afterschool programs.
  - Define and refine the work plan of the Pandemic Response Committee including, operations, planning, logistics, and finance/administration.
  - Meet with key stakeholders to understand their expectations for return to school across issue areas (e.g., certificated and classified unions).
• Conduct scenario planning with the Pandemic Response Committee and Return to School Committee. Create and consider multiple scenarios.

• Prepare a Return to In-Person Learning Plan.

• Prepare a COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP) with information included in Return to In-Person Learning Plan.

• Prepare a COVID-19 School Guidance Checklist.

District Actions: Do When Schools are Open and Operating

• Continue District Pandemic Response Committee workflows based on community pandemic-response alert level.

• Provide consistent updates on Return to School and pandemic response planning with community stakeholders.

• Conduct a debrief of the Return to School Committee’s work and codify recommendations for future planning.

• Monitor and follow San Mateo County Health, California Department of Public Health, and SMCOE guidance concerning COVID-19 and schools.
V. School Site Planning Considerations

School site leaders have much to consider in preparing a safe and smooth opening to the 2020–21 school year. Consider the following while planning school site operations:

Space

- How can desks and learning centers be arranged in the classroom to meet physical distancing guidelines? Arrange desks in a way that minimizes face-to-face contact.
- How should lockers be assigned or utilized, if at all?
- What procedures will ensure safe and healthy use of bathrooms?
- Serve meals outdoors or in classrooms instead of cafeterias or group dining rooms where practicable. How can lunch rooms and outdoor eating areas be reconfigured to meet physical distancing guidelines?
- Can staff lounges be reconfigured to ensure safe health conditions and meet physical distancing guidelines requirements?
- How will staff understand the guidelines of the Four Pillars as they apply to staff breaks and mealtimes?
- Determine distance and flow paths through the facility, marking floors and walls with visual cues.
- Post signage displaying proper hygiene practices around campus, including restrooms.
- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least six feet apart (e.g., reception desks). These barriers do not protect against viral particulates.
- What elements must be in place for the school’s isolation room to provide proper isolation and safety for all?
- Consider using outdoor space or existing school gardens to create outdoor classrooms. Outdoor spaces can provide added physical space, fresh air, and equitable access to the outdoors for students. Local resources are available to
support this effort. More information can be found here or contact SMCOE’s Environmental Literacy and Sustainability Initiative.

Schedule

- Work with all bargaining units to agree on changes to start dates and times, etc.
- How will student arrival times be staggered?
- How will daily health screenings be integrated into the school day schedule?
- How will end-of-day dismissal be organized to ensure physical distancing?
- How will the daily schedule support safe implementation of brunch, lunch, and/or recess?
- Consider if additional time is necessary for passing periods, student breaks, or recess to accommodate all groups.
- Develop a daily schedule to minimize students mixing outside of their main group.

Visitors

- Limit nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations – especially individuals who are not from the local geographic area.
- Consider requiring all visitors, including parents to remain outside school buildings through early phases of reopening.
- Pursue virtual activities and events in lieu of field trips, student assemblies, special performances, school-wide parent meetings, and spirit nights.

Supplies and Cleaning

- What supplies should be on hand before students arrive?

Communication

- Develop a communication and outreach plan for students and parents.
- Provide clear information on any new academic and attendance policies for students, parents, and staff.
- Provide clear and repetitive communication on proper hygiene techniques for teachers, staff, and students.
School Site Planning Considerations

- Maintain communication systems that allow staff and families to self-report symptoms and receive prompt notifications of exposures and closures, while maintaining confidentiality, as required by FERPA and state law related to privacy of educational records.

Classrooms

- Consider providing individually assigned bins for student supplies.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials (art supplies, equipment, etc.) to the extent practicable or limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of children at a time and clean between uses.
- Avoid sharing electronic devices, clothing, toys, books and other games or learning aids as much as practicable. Clean between uses.
- Consider how to use outdoors or larger spaces such as gymnasiums, auditoriums, and lunchrooms for additional learning space.
- Consider how specialist teachers (e.g., music, art, physical education) can provide instruction to student groups through remote means.
- Consider utilizing outdoor/open air spaces for providing individualized intervention and support services to students, including unique special education services.
- Implement procedures for turning in assignments to minimize contact.

Training

- Provide training to all staff on supporting students’ mental health.
- Prioritize professional development on skills relevant to distance learning.
- Consider conducting staff meetings virtually or in a large enough space to accommodate physical distancing.
- Provide training to all staff on proper cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing.

Physical Education and Athletics

- Deliver physical education instruction remotely or through individual workouts, but ensure there is no sharing of equipment.
- Indoor physical conditioning and training are allowed only in counties where gyms and fitness centers are allowed to operate indoors.
School athletic activities and sports should follow the CDPH Outdoor and Indoor Youth and Recreational Adult Sports Guidance.

Physical conditioning, practice, skill-building, and training that can be conducted outdoors, with six feet of physical distancing, and within stable cohorts are authorized regardless of county tier status. Such activities may be conducted indoors consistent with restrictions by Tier in the Gym & Fitness Center Guidance Capacity.

In counties under the Regional Stay at Home Order, only activities consistent with the bullet immediately above are permitted, regardless of the county’s tier status.

Inter-team competitions (i.e., between two teams) are allowed in California beginning January 25, 2021, based on the guidelines outlined in this document.

Teams must not participate in out-of-state tournaments; several multistate outbreaks have been reported in California residents and around the nation.

Inter-team competitions, meets, races, or similar events are authorized only if (a) both teams are located in the same county and the sport is authorized in the Table below; or (b) teams are located in immediately bordering counties and the sport is authorized in both counties.

The county-based authorizations outlined in the Outdoor and Indoor Youth and Recreational Adult Sports Guidance applies to the locations/counties in which the teams, schools, clubs, leagues, and similar organizations are functionally based (e.g., where the players reside, where facilities are located, etc.).

Any tournaments or events that involve more than two teams are not currently permitted in California. Exceptions may be made, with authorization from the local health department, for the following sports where individual competitors from multiple teams are routine: track and field; cross-country; golf; skiing/snowboarding; tennis; and swimming/diving.

See the table in the Outdoor and Indoor Youth and Recreational Adult Sports for information on sports permitted by the county’s current tier on the Blueprint for a Safer Economy.
**Singing and Playing Instruments**

- Outdoor singing and band practice are permitted, provided that precautions, such as physical distancing and mask wearing, are implemented to the maximum extent possible.

- Playing of wind instruments (any instrument played by the mouth, such as a trumpet or clarinet) is strongly discouraged.

- School officials, staff, parents, and students should be aware of the increased likelihood for transmission from exhaled droplets during singing and band practice, and physical distancing beyond six feet is strongly recommended for any of these activities.
VI. Continuum of Learning Options

Districts may consider developing a continuum of options for blending on-campus and at-home learning as an alternative to school closures. The following are possible models for student learning that are based on current conditions and information available at this time. Each district will need to develop its own plan, taking into account all health and safety conditions outlined in this framework.

A. Instructional Models

Explore and understand the following menu of learning structures and then select and combine structures to create multiple options for meeting students’ learning needs:

- At-School Learning
- Digital Synchronous – Learn online together
- Digital Asynchronous – Learn online independently
- Phone Synchronous – Learn together on the phone
- Phone Asynchronous – Learn offline independently
- Independent Study
- Home School – Districts that do not currently run a Home School program can use CDE models
- Hybrid/Blended Learning – Learn online together and work offline independently
- Extension
- Learning Center – Supports student learning via virtual appointments

See the California Collaborative for Education Excellence’s Distance Learning Playbook and the Hybrid Learning Playbook for additional ideas.

B. Structures that Support the Continuum of Learning

District and school leaders must balance an array of factors and conditions to determine the most effective instructional models for their students and school community. Districts may develop an alternative or blended model that conforms with physical distancing standards set by the County Health Officer. Considerations are summarized below.
Schedule Considerations

- Limit schedule variances within the district. Avoid having schools in the same district establish different schedules.
- Consider partnerships between elementary and high school districts with local childcare centers to align schedules and services.
- Attempt to create schedules that can accommodate smooth transitioning to 100% in-person or 100% at-home learning.
- Select schedules that support students’ academic, behavioral, and social-emotional success.
- Consider schedules that support re-teaching and remediation.

Schedule Options

- Staggered starts
- A/B groupings or alternating days
- **Block scheduling**
  - 4x4 block schedules; 3x3 block schedules
- Pair middle and high school schedules
- Integrate multiple lunch, brunch, and recess times into the school day
- AM/PM splits (clean each day between AM/PM sessions)
- AM or PM in-person learning with other half of day for distance learning/instruction

Space Considerations

- Assess classroom/learning space square footage
- Consider how to utilize common spaces to support learning
- Consider how to utilize outside space to support learning
- Ensure physical distancing in all settings
- Use visual reminders/markers to support physical distancing
- Assign seats to students to ensure physical distancing
Ways to Limit the Number of Students on Campus

- Alternating days
- Staggered start/end time
- Hybrid blend of in-school and at-home learning

C. Design Options to Support Learning for TK-12 Settings

- Option One:
  - Limit the number of students on campus to 50% of typical enrollment.
  - Divide all classes into two equal groups and schedule groups to attend in-person learning on alternating days in the week.
  - Provide each group with two days of direct instruction and support, and three days of assignments/activities to complete at home each week.
  - Provide take-home meals for each eligible student before they leave each day.

- Option Two:
  - Limit the number of students on campus to 25% of typical enrollment.
  - Divide all classes into four equal groups – one for each day of the week.
  - Provide each group with one day of direct instruction and support and four days of assignments/activities to complete at home.
  - Provide take-home meals for eligible students before they leave each day.
  - Use Fridays for teachers to provide individual or small-group support by appointment or to prepare packets for the next week

- Option Three:
  - For districts that can provide universal internet access, pair Option One or Option Two with a classroom webcast to provide direct instruction five-days per week.
Continuum of Learning Options

- Additional Options:
  - For students who are best served through an at-home learning model and for teachers who are qualified to teach distance learning, develop a robust distance learning curriculum, provide ongoing professional development, and build out family engagement and support strategies.
  - Districts may opt for an AM/PM minimum-day schedule with a waiver filed with CDE to waive the state minimum number of minutes.
  - Districts may opt for a blended learning program that alternates students between on-campus and distance learning each day/week.
  - Consider the use of learning centers to support student learning with weekly in-person and virtual appointments for support.
  - Develop the capacity to provide Home and Hospital Instruction (EC 48206.3) via remote technology to assist students who are ill, under quarantine, or in self-isolation.
  - Develop the capacity to provide synchronous interactive distance learning as a means of providing instruction for students who cannot physically participate in classroom instruction.

- Independent Study
  - Develop robust independent study (IS) programs as an alternative for parents who want this option. Include a variety of options that allow IS students to participate in campus life.
  - Consider a countywide program operated by SMCOE to consolidate outlay of resources.

- Grade Span Planning
  - For districts with preschool programs, consider whether the schedule will be the same as that of school-age students.
  - For high school students, encourage dual enrollment in college and community colleges.
  - For high school students, consider different attendance policies for ninth and tenth graders vs eleventh and twelfth graders.
In high school settings, consider online instruction for ELA, Math, History, etc. and hold activity and intervention classes on-campus.

**Middle and High School Settings**

- Consider keeping a single group together in one classroom and have educators rotate between groups.
- Have smaller groups move together in staggered passing schedules to other rooms they need to use (e.g., science labs) without allowing students or staff to mix with others from distinctive groups.
- Teachers and supports staff from different content areas can work in teams that share students, preferably in a dedicated space, separate from others.
- Keep students in one stable group that stays together with one or two instructors who teach them directly part of the day and support their instruction from others who teach them virtually during other parts of the day.
- Electives can be offered virtually or organized so that no group of students takes more than one elective in a term and the elective teachers do not work with more than one or two groups.
- Stable groups could switch schedules or even membership after a break at the quarter, trimester, or semester in ways that support students being able to take additional classes without substantial group mixing.
- The school year can be divided into even smaller time units – 4 to 8 weeks for example – in which students study one or two subjects intensively, completing all of the work they might normally have completed in a semester or a year.

**D. Minimum Instructional Minutes**

SB 98 set requirements on the minimum number of daily instructional minutes provided to students. These include:

- 180 min K
- 230 min 1–3
- 240 min 4–12
These minutes can be met in any combination of instructional models, from in-person to distance learning.

Districts need to offer in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible.

Daily live interaction between students, their peers, and teachers is required. If daily live interaction is not feasible, then the board needs to adopt a plan for frequent live interaction.

**E. Learning Continuity and Attendance Plans**

By September 30, 2020, LEAs must adopt a Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan which describes how state, federal, and learning loss mitigation funds will be used to provide continuity of learning and address the impact of COVID-19 on pupils, staff, and the community in the following areas:

- Distance Learning
- Learning Loss
- Mental Health/ Social Emotional Well-being of Students and Staff
- Professional Development
- Pupil Engagement and Outreach
- School Nutrition

The plan must also include how LEAs are increasing or improving service in proportion to unduplicated students.
VII. Serving Students with Special Needs

District and special education administrators should work together with families of students with special needs. In this COVID–19 environment, the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) might look different for different students. District teams may consider alternative settings located away from the central campus that may support classrooms with sinks, bathrooms, and unfettered access to outdoor areas. Such environments may also support students who are immunosuppressed or have significant health challenges.

Supporting Students with Fragile Health

It is critical to consider the needs of students with fragile health during return–to–campus planning. School teams should:

• Be vigilant about identifying these students’ needs at the start of the planning process.
• Consider whether in–person or at–home learning best supports a student’s needs.
• Support special education staff by providing additional EPE such as gowns for diapering and feeding, face shields, and access to sinks with hot and cold water.
• Train staff in the proper use of EPE and health and hygiene protocols within the context of COVID–19.
• Engage school/district nurses in supporting student learning plans and needs.

Supporting Students with Limited Communication and/or Moderate–Severe Disabilities

School staff should consider the use of icons and social stories that can be loaded on an iPad in multiple languages for digital access or printed to educate students about the Four Pillars and the context around modified school operations.
VIII. Mental Health Supports

Students and staff may return to school having experienced some type of loss due to COVID-19 or as a result of sheltering in place. It is important for school staff to be aware of the various types of trauma students and staff may be experiencing, how that trauma might manifest itself in words or behavior, and how to best support students and other school staff experiencing mental health challenges.

Types of Trauma
Large scale disasters, such as a global pandemic, can cause trauma in students even if they are not directly affected by a COVID-19 death. The loss of connection with school and peers, for example, can impact a student negatively. Students’ families may have experienced the loss of financial stability or housing during the shelter in place. Even the loss of opportunities for learning may cause students stress and anxiety, resulting in trauma symptoms.

Recognize the Signs
Well-informed teachers and school personnel can be a source of support for students and each other. Recognizing signs of stress in students, colleagues, and one’s self can help facilitate the healing process after a disaster or traumatic event.

School counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers can help teachers identify risk factors and signs of distress that may indicate the need for mental health services above what is offered at school. As with any counseling services, parents should be notified if additional services are recommended.

Please see the companion document, Pandemic Recovery Framework: Mental Health Companion Document, for more information.
IX. Parent Engagement and Communication

There will continue to be a broad spectrum of opinions in the community regarding government and school responses (from overreacting to under reacting) to COVID–19. To help address the fears and lack of information that may underlie these opinions, consider taking the following steps:

- Survey parents on preferred learning options for their students. Inquire about willingness to return children to campus or keep them at home. Provide information on school’s plans that addresses concerns identified.

- Engage in a robust information campaign on school/public health issues, including well–child checks, immunization requirements for school enrollment, and flu vaccination as a proactive measure parents and employees can take to lessen the likelihood of school closures due to the combined impact of seasonal influenza and COVID–19.

- Encourage the school PTA to support communication and outreach efforts.

- Consider providing parent education in multiple languages in order to better support distance learning and social emotional health for students.

- Develop a proactive communications plan:
  - Provide regular communication to families.
  - Consider the needs of dual language learners and families with low–literacy rates when developing family communications.
  - Use simple language, key message bullets, and clear formatting that highlights key information.
  - Consider providing a way for families to access information through recordings via school messenger systems, etc.
  - Create and share timelines for expected communication.
  - Use a consistent messaging format.
  - Use a variety of communication tools (email, texts, social media) to direct parents to a website or other official source of information.
  - Define and use common terms, while avoiding acronyms and jargon.
Parent Engagement and Communication

- Manage expectations.
- Promote ways for parents to engage virtually (e.g., evening Zoom meetings).
X. School Board Leadership and Policy Considerations

Board-Level Actions

School district governing boards play a critical role during any emergency event. In a pandemic recovery, these duties may include:

- Developing policies (grades, graduation, promotion, retention, instructional days, instruction minutes, period per day, etc.)
- Advocating for resources and support for the district
- Supporting staff decisions
- Maintaining clear boundaries between board and staff roles
- Staying informed (e.g., reading board packet, minutes, weekly communication, etc.)
- Ensuring school policies are supportive of students and staff staying home when sick and offer options for people who are at high risk of developing serious symptoms associated with COVID-19
- Exploring opportunities for staff who cannot be at school due to their own high-risk conditions or those of their family members to complete work utilizing alternate spaces (e.g., telecommute)

Needed Board Policies

Governing boards should also take time to review and update policies as needed, including the following:

- Board’s privacy policy
- Face covering exemption policy
- Policies concerning annual physicals and vaccinations
  - Local pediatricians and the County Health Officer have requested schools relax the annual student physical requirements to reduce the burden on the healthcare system during the COVID-19 health emergency.
  - Student health/dental screenings and proof of immunizations are still required for school enrollment. However, electronic records may be
submitted to reduce the impact to the healthcare system.

○ A physical once every two years is sufficient for children and teens who are otherwise healthy. This is in accordance with current American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines. Consider a COVID-19-based waiver or change of timeline.

○ An **in-person** physical is not required to allow students to participate in school athletics. A district may accept a healthcare provider’s certification that a student is cleared to participate in school athletics even if the appointment was conducted through tele-medicine.

○ CIF issued a [waiver of its annual physical requirement](#), allowing students to begin playing fall school athletics.

- Liability considerations

  ○ There is no course of action that will guarantee a district will not experience COVID-19 related claims by employees, volunteers, students, or members of the public.

  ○ Legislation is anticipated in the next year that creates highly specialized liability rules for exposure-related claims. It is expected to extend more protection to school districts.

  ○ The best protection from COVID-19-related claims is strict adherence to regulations and guidelines issued by local health officials. Any departure from those guidelines can be leveraged as evidence that the district violated its own established standard of care.
Appendix

COVID-19 Funding

Contact Tracing and Communication Protocol

Sample Messages to the School Community

Guidance on Travel

Glossary

Sources

SMC Pandemic Recovery for Schools Framework Companion Documents

- COVID-19 Healthy Cleaning Guide
- Cleaning and Disinfection Procedures Manual
- Facilities Walkthrough Checklist
- Pandemic Recovery Framework: Licensed Early Learning and Care Companion Document
- Pandemic Recovery Framework: Mental Health Companion Document
- Sample Board Policy: COVID-19 Mitigation Plan

Outdoor Classrooms

- Division of the State Architect (DSA) Revised Bulletin: DSA Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic for Emergency School Facilities
COVID-19 Funding

**ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) - $1.65B**

- Allocation Formula: Based on Title I Part A received in FY 2019–20
- Allowable use: Activities authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), IDEA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Perkins CTE Act, or the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- Availability: Funds will be available in FY 2020–21 once State Budget Act is signed into law. Generally accepted accounting principles for modified accrual basis accounting require that there be an appropriation of funds in order for revenue recognition to take place. Therefore, LEAs should not recognize ESSER Fund revenue until 2020–21.
- Application Process: [https://www3.cde.ca.gov/esserassurances/logon.aspx](https://www3.cde.ca.gov/esserassurances/logon.aspx)
- SACS Resource code: RE 3210 is available to record expenditures for FY 2019–20

**GEER and CRF (Governor’s Emergency Education Relief & Coronavirus Relief Fund) - $4.4B**

- Allocation Formula: $2.9B to LEAs based on their proportion of supplemental and concentration grant funding using 2019–20 P–2 apportionment certification. Balance $1.5B would be distributed to all LEAs based on Fall 1 census enrollment of SWDs ages 3 to 22.
- Allowable use: extending the instructional school year, additional academic supports including devices for distance learning, or wraparound services.
- Timeline: for costs incurred between March 1 and December 30, 2020, CDE will be providing updates on this funding as they are available.

**SB 98 Education omnibus budget trailer bill ($165 per student on average)**

- Allocation Formula: Eligible LEAs LCFF entitlement determined as of 2019–20 second principal apportionment certification. This equates to
approximately $165 per average daily attendance (ADA)

- Data for a locally funded charter school shall be included in the determination of the chartering authority funding.

Local education agencies (LEAs) receiving learning loss mitigation funds shall adopt an instructional continuity plan (Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan) by September 30, 2020, that describes the following:

- How the funds will be used to mitigate learning loss as a result of COVID-19.
- How the LEA will ensure that all students are provided devices and connectivity.
- How the effectiveness of the services or supports provided will be measured.

### CARES Act

\[ \text{GEER} \quad \text{Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)} \quad \text{Learning Loss Mitigation} \]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{GEER} & \quad \text{Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)} \\
$335M$ & \quad $4.0B \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[ = \quad \text{Learning Loss Mitigation} \]

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\begin{align*}
\text{ESSER} & \quad \text{Prop 98 General Fund} \\
\text{Essential State Aid} & \quad \text{Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)} \\
$1.65B$ & \quad $540M$ \\
\end{align*}
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\[ = \quad \text{Learning Loss Mitigation} \]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{SB 98} & \quad \text{Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)} \\
\text{Learning Loss Mitigation} & \quad \text{Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)} \\
$440M$ & \quad $4.0B$ \\
\end{align*}
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\text{SB 117} & \quad \text{Learning Loss Mitigation} \\
\text{Learning Loss Mitigation} & \quad \text{Learning Loss Mitigation} \\
$1.0B$ & \quad $980M$ \\
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Other resources:

- CDE - ESSER Fund Frequently Asked Questions (CDE)
  [https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/cr/esserfaqs.asp](https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/cr/esserfaqs.asp)
- CARES Act Funding - Finance & Grants (CDE)
  [https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/cr/](https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/cr/)
Contact Tracing and Communication Protocol

Do Now

- School districts and private schools should submit the name and contact information of each School and District COVID-19 Point Person to SMCOE and San Mateo County Communicable Disease Control Program (SMC CD Control) using this form. The School and District COVID-19 Point Persons should be trained to coordinate the documentation and tracking of possible exposures in order to notify local health officials, staff, and families in a prompt and responsible manner.

- After submitting this information, the School or District Point Person will be asked to submit a map/floor plan to SMC CD Control for each school, which would be used during discussions about contact tracing.

When District/Private School Has a Case of COVID-19

- The School COVID-19 Point Person must report all COVID-19 cases and clusters of undiagnosed respiratory illness to SMC CD Control as soon as practicable (within 24 hours).

- The School Point Person should immediately notify the District Point Person of COVID-19 cases in the school community.

- The School COVID-19 Point Person and the assigned San Mateo County Health investigator will be in daily contact Monday – Friday, unless instructed otherwise by SMC CD Control.

- The District COVID-19 Point Person collects data from all schools and must complete a daily report for all new cases (a line list) and submit it via secure email daily by 10:00 a.m.

- The District COVID-19 Point Person or Superintendent/Private School Head should notify SMCOE at (650) 802-5515.

Responsibilities of San Mateo County Public Health

- Conduct formal contact tracing
• Advise School Point Person on the school site response

**Responsibilities of School COVID-19 Point Person**

• Report data on cases per the protocol
• Follow advice of San Mateo County Health
• Seek additional guidance as necessary from the District Point Person

**Responsibilities of District COVID-19 Point Person**

• Ensure a COVID-19 School Point Person for each school is identified
• Receive and provide training
• Ensure strong communication channels within the district and with San Mateo County Health and SMCOE
• Submit line list to San Mateo County Health
Sample Messages to the School Community

- Sample message to a school community when a student, teacher, or staff member has been identified as a case.
- Sample message to school community when a student or staff member is a close contact.
- Sample message to those who may be a close contact in the school.
- Letter to families regarding travel.
- Cal/OSHA Sample Notice of Potential COVID-19 Exposure to Employees
- Cal/OSHA Sample Notice of Potential COVID-19 Exposure to Union Representatives
- Cal/OSHA Sample Notice of Potential COVID-19 Exposure to Contractors
- Cal/OSHA Sample Notice of Potential COVID-19 Exposure to Public Health
**Guidance on Travel**

The County Office of Education has received questions about how schools and districts should address travel by staff and students. This document seeks to address these questions and provide a legal context for decisions around students and staff who return to school after having traveled.

**School Staff Travel**

- Employers may require employees to disclose any travel plans or recent travel and remind employees of SMCH and CDC recommendations regarding travel. Employers may also require employees to complete a questionnaire prior to returning to work confirming they do not have a temperature and are symptom-free, and/or conduct symptom/temperature checks on site.
- Employers can test employees who are returning from travel even if it isn’t their “turn” yet according to the school site’s testing strategy.
- Note that COVID-19 symptoms can appear 2–14 days after exposure, and an individual may test negative prior to developing symptoms. Recent guidance from the CDC discourages a test-based strategy and encourages a symptom-based screening strategy to identify when an individual with symptoms can return to work.
- If an employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine, tests positive for COVID-19, or is experiencing symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis, they must not report to work in person and may be entitled to FFCRA or other paid sick leave.
- To the extent possible, an employer may allow employees who have traveled to work remotely for at least 14 days following their return.
- If remote work is not available, there is legal risk in requiring employees who have traveled to self-quarantine without pay unless they have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine, test positive for COVID-19, or are experiencing symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.

**Travel by Students or Members of Their Households**

- Although school districts can strongly encourage students to be tested when
they return from travel, there is no legal authority permitting a district to exclude a student who has traveled or refuses to participate in COVID-19 testing upon return from travel.

- Students have a constitutional right to attend public school, and there are limited bases upon which a district may exclude a student from attendance: they have not satisfied the immunization requirements; they’re sick with a contagious or infectious disease; or they are under an isolation or quarantine order.

- Without the clear recommendation of a physician or specific public health guidance, public schools may not be able to keep students from returning to school after travel.

- Schools can ask that families follow the CDC’s recommendations (below) for returning from travel.

- The CDPH does not require the testing of students. Instead, the CDPH directs schools to check students for “signs and symptoms” of COVID-19.

- Additionally, there is no public health guidance that recommends keeping students at home if members of their households have recently returned from travel.

**CDC Guidance on Travel**

- Staying home is the best way for a person to protect themselves and others from the spread of COVID-19. Travel to any destination during the pandemic increases an individual’s chances of getting and spreading COVID-19.

- After travel, regardless of the destination, all individuals should follow the Four Pillars, monitor their health, look for symptoms of COVID-19, and take their temperature if they are feeling sick.

- If an individual participated in higher risk activities* during travel, the individual should take extra precautions for 14 days after returning from their trip, including staying home as much as possible, and avoiding being around people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. They may want to get tested for COVID-19 as well.
*Higher risk activities include:

- Travel to an area that is experiencing high levels of COVID-19, including destinations with a Level 3 Risk Level
- Large social gatherings (such as weddings, funerals, or parties)
- Mass gatherings (such as sporting events, concerts, or parades)
- Being in crowds (e.g., at restaurants, bars, airports, bus, and train stations, and movie theaters)
- Travel on a cruise ship or river boat

**SMCH Guidance on Travel**

Schools are encouraged to share this information with students’ families and staff. Visit SMCH’s website for guidance about travel.

COVID-19 is spreading rapidly in many parts of the country. Nonessential travel is not recommended. Traveling outside the Bay Area will increase your chance of getting infected and spreading the virus to others after your return. Additional precautions should also be taken when hosting and interacting with people traveling to the Bay Area, especially from other areas with widespread COVID-19.

If you travel outside the Bay Area, it is strongly recommended that you self-quarantine for 10 days after your return if your activities while travelling put you at higher risk of getting COVID-19. These higher risk activities include:

- Spending time within 6 feet of people you do not normally live with, while you or anyone around you was not wearing a face mask – especially if you were indoors.
- Traveling on planes, buses, trains, public transportation, or other shared vehicles, if face masks were not worn at all times by both you and the other people in the vehicle.

**Do not travel if you are sick. You could spread COVID-19 or another infection.**

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, get tested and wait for a negative test result before you start your trip. Even if you test negative for COVID-19, you should not travel if you’re feeling ill as you may spread another infection.
If you must travel, take steps to reduce risk:

- Wear a face covering
- Keep at least six feet of physical distance from others (more distance is safer)
- Ventilate your space, if possible (for example, open the bus or taxi window)
- Wash or sanitize your hands often
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Avoid contact with anyone who is sick
- Avoid contact with frequently touched surfaces
- Get tested before and after you travel
- Get a flu shot

Air travel
Most viruses do not spread easily on flights because of how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes. However, it is likely that you will be sitting within six feet of others for long periods of time, which can increase your risk of getting COVID-19. Air travel also requires spending time in security lines and airport terminals, which can bring you in close contact with other people and frequently touched surfaces. Finally, during the holidays, planes and airports may be significantly more crowded than usual, which also increases risk of transmission.

Car travel
Don’t share vehicles with people you don’t live with. Vehicles are small enclosed spaces where COVID-19 can spread easily between people. If you must share a vehicle, try to ride with the same people each time, make sure everyone wears a face covering and open the windows to maximize outdoor air circulation as much as you can.

If you must travel, plan ahead.

Is COVID-19 spreading where you are traveling? 
The more cases at your destination, the more likely you are to get infected during travel and spread the virus to others when you return. For cases in the last seven days by state, see the CDC’s COVID Data Tracker.
Are you, your travel companions, or those you are visiting at higher risk for serious illness?
Older adults and people with underlying medical conditions are more likely to get really sick if they get COVID-19. The virus can be spread among people who are not feeling any symptoms.

Will you be able to social distance from others during your trip?
It is hard to maintain six feet of space from others when using public transportation like airplanes, buses, trains, and taxis. Even when traveling in your own vehicle, you may find yourself in close contact with other people and frequently touched surfaces while making stops along the way.

Can you watch for symptoms and get tested?
In the event that you must travel, it’s important to monitor yourself for symptoms for 10 days after your return and get tested immediately if you have any symptoms. Even if you don’t develop symptoms, consider getting tested around 3–7 days after your return, particularly if returning from an area with more COVID-19 transmission than we have in the Bay Area, or if you engaged in activities that put you at risk for getting COVID-19. If you do any activity where you might have been exposed to COVID-19, including travel, reduce your contact with other people as much as possible for 10 days, keep your distance from others, and make extra sure that you always wear a face covering anytime you’re outside your household.
Glossary

Case/Close Contact/Indirect Contact:

Case: A person who tests positive for a disease.
Close Contact: A person who is within less than six feet from a confirmed case for more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period regardless of face covering use.
Indirect Contact: People who may have been in proximity to a close contact.

Cleaning: The removal of dirt and impurities, including germs, from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs. By removing the germs, cleaning decreases their number and therefore reduces the risk of spreading infection.

Community facilities: Schools, daycare centers, and business properties that comprise most non-healthcare settings visited by the general public outside of a household.

Disinfecting: The use of chemicals, for example EPA-registered disinfectants, to kill germs on surfaces. Disinfecting does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but killing germs remaining on a surface after cleaning further reduces the risk of spreading infection.

Essential Protective Equipment: Sometimes referred to as “EPE.” Equipment worn and used to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses. In response to COVID-19, essential protective equipment may include items such as face coverings, gloves, handwashing supplies including hand sanitizer, and safety glasses for some workers. Sometimes referred to as PPE.

Face Covering: a covering made of cloth, fabric, or other soft or permeable material, without holes, that covers only the nose and mouth and surrounding areas of the lower face.

Fomites: Objects or materials that are likely to carry infection, such as clothes, utensils, and furniture.

Herd Immunity: A situation in which a sufficient proportion of a population is immune to an infectious disease (through vaccination and/or prior illness) to make its spread from person to person unlikely. Even individuals not vaccinated (such as newborns and
those with chronic illnesses) are offered some protection because the disease has little opportunity to spread within the community. Also known as community immunity.

**Isolation:** Used to separate people infected with a contagious disease from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it is safe for them to be around others. In the home, sick/infected individuals should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific “sick” room or area and using a separate bathroom if available.

**Quarantine:** The practice of separating individuals who have had close contact with someone with a contagious disease such as COVID-19 from others. People who are in quarantine should stay home until it is safe for them to be around others. They should stay home, separate from others, and monitor their health.

**Stable Group:** A group with fixed membership that stays together without mixing with any other groups for any activities. Its size is dictated by the ability to implement physical distancing within the classroom or primary learning setting.
Appendix

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