

School Reopening Principles California State PTA

Schools should not open in person unless it is safe for students and staff. School districts should adhere to the requirements set forth by the California Department of Public Health and county health departments regarding the reopening of schools. Protecting the health and well-being of students, staff and families must come first.

- School districts must provide a variety of opportunities for robust input and feedback from parents who are representative of the demographics of the school community. Communication with families and students should be early and often. Two-way communication before and during school reopening planning and implementation is critical for the health and safety of all students, staff and families.
- Parents and families should be able to ask questions and receive responses about the school's plans before a physical return to school. Plans should include information about physical safety, distancing practices, health screenings and testing, and ventilation systems. Parents should be informed of the district's plan of action in the event of an outbreak, detailing the possibility of reclosure or quarantine of some students and staff. A helpful guide including questions to ask was developed by PACE in conjunction with California State PTA; ***"Navigating the Uncertainty of Reopening Schools: A Guide for Parents, Families and the Public"*** is available on our website at capta.org.
- Parents and families should be provided with choice in determining whether their child returns to the classroom full or part-time or participates in distance learning or a hybrid model.
- Some children are disproportionately impacted by distance learning. The needs of children living in poverty, English language learners, children with disabilities and special needs, and other vulnerable students must be effectively addressed. It is not acceptable for any child to miss out on crucial learning opportunities.
- In order for distance and hybrid models of teaching and learning to be successful for all children and youth, all students must have access to the internet and compatible computers or tablets.
- There needs to be flexibility in timing that works for families with multiple children, working families, and families with other hurdles. For middle and high school students, schools should not start before 8:30 am to protect student health and well-being. Getting input ahead of time from local families about these issues is imperative.
- Schools are encouraged to limit the number and types of platforms that students and families must navigate in order to participate successfully in distance or hybrid learning.
- Distance and hybrid models of teaching and learning should include the same instructional supports and high quality of learning and instruction as traditional on-site instruction, addressing equity and incorporating age and developmentally appropriate instructional best practices.
- Afterschool and childcare programs need to be available and coordinated with the school day for working families.