



February 22, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Coalition of North State, Opened Schools responds to Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> CDPH Guidance**

Dear Governor Newsom:

Your administration's recent focus on the importance and safety of reopening schools is well deserved and timely, as it has been nearly a year since most of the state's classrooms were closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we write to share the frustration of educators, parents, and communities whose schools have already been open to in-person instruction — many since the start of the school year in August. The recent January 14<sup>th</sup> guidance for schools released by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) hinders, rather than helps, these schools to continue their efforts to provide safe, in-person instruction.

These schools have risen to the occasion to provide safe, in-person instruction. Some did it because distance learning was impossible due to lack of broadband access, while some were simply committed to doing the essential work of public education. Overwhelmingly, while following the previous CDPH guidance and working closely with county health officers, they have seen minimal if any transmission of COVID-19 on school campuses. They have worked closely with their labor partners to meet any employee safety concerns; working conditions have proven safe and overwhelmingly their teachers want to continue working in traditional classrooms.

Their success amid adversity has been absent in discussions about whether it is safe to open schools in California, even though there is ample data from local public health officers that it is working. The January 14<sup>th</sup> school guidance has moved the goalpost yet again for these schools, and will force them to move backwards to a hybrid model, particularly due to the rigid new requirements for four feet of distance between desks. This arbitrary new rule will force a return to distance-learning without any data suggesting that COVID-19 is spreading on campuses, or that community transmission is worse in these communities.

Nearly a month after releasing this unworkable guidance, CDPH decided to allow districts to file "safety review requests" to appeal for permission to do what they had been doing in some cases

for months. This is generating confusion and paperwork for school administrators who are already overwhelmed.

On behalf of dozens of local education agencies in our northeastern California legislative districts that have already been operating safely, we the undersigned urge you to cease the issuance of arbitrary guidance and leave this authority to local health officers. As local education leaders, we need the flexibility to continue the practices we have developed with our labor partners and local health officers to provide safe, in-person instruction.

Sincerely,



MEGAN DAHLE

Assemblywoman, 1st District

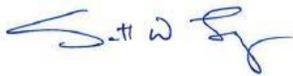


BRIAN DAHLE

Senator, 1st District



Tom O'Malley  
Superintendent, Modoc Joint Unified School District



Scott W. Lay  
Nevada County Superintendent of Schools



Micheline G. Miglis  
Superintendent, Scott Valley Unified School District



Gordon T. Medd  
Superintendent, Loomis Unified School District



Judy Flores  
Superintendent, Shasta County Schools



Mike Martin  
Superintendent, Modoc County Schools



Gayle Garbolino-Mojica  
Superintendent, Placer County Schools



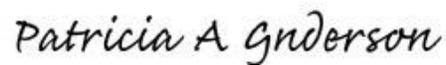
Jason Waddell  
Superintendent, Susanville School District



Robert Effa  
Superintendent, Grant Elementary School District



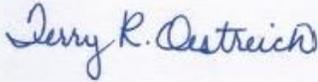
Jon Ray  
Superintendent, Weed Union Elementary School District



Patricia Gunderson  
Superintendent, Lassen County Schools



Robert Adams  
Superintendent, Redding School District



Terry R. Oestreich  
Superintendent, Plumas County Schools



Paula Silva  
Superintendent, Big Valley Joint Unified School District

*Victor M. Hopper*

Victor M. Hopper  
Superintendent, Anderson Union High School District



James M. Harrell  
Superintendent, Gateway Unified School District

*Chris Harris*

Chris Harris  
Superintendent, Yreka Union School District

*Helen Herd*

Helen Herd  
Superintendent, Happy Valley Union School District



Roger Stock  
Superintendent, Rocklin Unified School District

Morgan Nugent

Morgan Nugent  
Superintendent, Lassen Union High School District