

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND
SHEILA KUEHL

February 23, 2021

Reopening Assistance for Schools

On February 16, 2021, Los Angeles County’s (County) COVID-19 case rate met California’s (State) requirements to reopen in-person instruction for grades TK through 6. Schools in full compliance with State and County directives may reopen. These directives include masking and distancing for all staff and students, infection control measures, small stable groups of students, testing plans, sufficient ventilation, and consultation with labor, parent, and community organizations.

Correct and consistent mask use is known to slow the spread of COVID-19. Masks work best when everyone wears them, but not all masks provide the same protection. A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control highlighted the importance of well-fitted, higher quality masks to maximize protection. Specifically, the reopening protocols for schools require staff to wear face coverings at all times, except when working alone in private offices or when eating and drinking. In some instances, medical grade masks are recommended for school staff to provide care and instruction to children with certain health conditions.

As schools work towards reopening their classrooms to provide in-person

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instruction, there are significant costs and barriers with regards to infrastructure improvements, protective equipment and vaccine supply. A recent survey of 20 school districts in Los Angeles County demonstrated that schools in more affluent areas are moving faster to reopen than those in lower-income communities. It is critical to ensure that school districts, teachers, parents, and students are provided with the necessary information and resources to facilitate reopening planning and decisions. Until vaccines are widely available for adults and children, universal masking is a highly effective tool when combined with other public health measures such as physical distancing, well-ventilated indoor spaces, and hand washing.

WE, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct:

1. The County Emergency Operations Center, in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Office of Education, to distribute 1 million high-quality masks to 81 school districts across Los Angeles County, based on an equitable allocation model using Healthy Places Index or other similar metric;
2. The Los Angeles County Office of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Public Health, to:
 - a. Provide information to schools on how to access state funding provided by A.B. 841 (Ting) for energy upgrades and to test, adjust, and repair heating, air conditioning, and ventilation systems in schools; and
 - b. Provide information to schools on accessible testing options that will satisfy the State's requirements in order to access State grants for school reopenings.

WE, FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors send a five-signature letter to the Los Angeles County, Congressional Delegation in support of federal assistance to upgrade ventilation systems at schools.

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JH:kb