



San Diego Unified
SCHOOL DISTRICT

SDEA
San Diego Education Association

October 16, 2020

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

RE: Request for COVID-19 Diagnostic Tests to Support In-Person Instruction

Dear Governor Newsom:

We are writing to request COVID-19 diagnostic tests to support in-person instruction at San Diego Unified. Specifically, we request no less than 10,000 COVID-19 diagnostic tests per day or no less than 50,000 COVID-19 diagnostic tests per week (covering students and staff). We appreciate your efforts to double the State's testing capacity with an announcement on August 26, 2020 that secured 150,000 COVID-19 diagnostic tests a day with a turnaround time of 24 to 48 hours. As the State considers a distribution approach, we urge you to prioritize COVID-19 diagnostic tests for schools and to do so with equity as a guide for California's most vulnerable students. Testing capacity is necessary, location of testing sites need to be near, or on, school sites, and infrastructure to store, report, and analyze data will be required.

The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating inequities that have existed in California's education system for years. Access to COVID-19 diagnostic tests is no different and deployment should seek to address the issue of equity. San Diego Unified primarily serves students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged (nearly 60%), along with English learner students (22.4%) and students with disabilities (12.9%), above statewide averages. San Diego Unified has approached the challenges of our students with equity as a central area of focus, in collaboration with our labor partners, students and parents, and community stakeholders. These accomplishments are well-documented in the Learning Policy Institute's *Positive Outliers* report and in UCLA's Center for the Transformation of Schools report, titled *Giving Learning and Graduation New Meaning: One Student at a Time*. Yet, we are concerned that learning loss will erode these gains and further progress.

We agree that online distance learning is no substitute for in-person instruction, and we share your desire to resume in-person instruction. However, we can only resume in-person instruction

when it is safe to do so, and that requires a robust COVID-19 contact tracing and testing program in our schools. We have made progress to improve online distance learning for students in San Diego Unified, and to establish onsite learning loss mitigation for our most vulnerable students and for students with disabilities. For example, our online distance learning program includes up to three hours of synchronous learning for our students. Next, we are launching onsite learning loss mitigation, where students with disabilities and students who are below standards or not making grade level progress will have access to in-person instruction. All of these efforts were collectively bargained. However, further progress requires a commitment from the State to provide and to pay for COVID-19 diagnostic testing capacity for San Diego Unified.

We look forward to your consideration and leadership on this request.

Sincerely,



Kevin Faulconer
Mayor
San Diego



Kisha Borden
President
San Diego Education
Association



Cindy Marten
Superintendent
San Diego Unified School
District

cc: San Diego Legislative Delegation
Ann O'Leary, Chief of Staff, Office of Governor Newsom
Ana Matosantos, Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom
Ben Chida, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom
State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond
Stephanie Gregson, Chief Deputy Superintendent, Office of Superintendent Thurmond
Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, President, California State Board of Education
Brooks Allen, Executive Director, California State Board of Education
Debra Brown, Senior Policy Director, California State Board of Education
Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency
Paula Villescaz, Deputy Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency
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Dr. Erica Pan, MD, MPH, Acting State Public Health Officer, California Department of Public Health
Jeff Bell, Program Budget Manager, California Department of Finance
Jessica Holmes, Assistant Program Budget Manager, California Department of Finance
Kimberly Rodriguez, Policy Director, Office of Senate Pro Tempore Toni Atkins
Elisa Wynne, Deputy Staff Director, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee
Lynn Lorber, Chief Consultant, Senate Education Committee
Misty Feusahrens, Policy Consultant, Office of Speaker Anthony Rendon
Erin Gabel, Budget Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee
Tanya Lieberman, Chief Consultant, Assembly Education Committee