

PRESS RELEASE

California Children Ask for Relief from World's Longest Stay-at-Home Order

San Diego, January 25, 2021 Today, the State of California lifted its statewide stay-at-home orders to allow all of California to reopen - except schools. California children have now been forced to stay at home for 312 days - arguably the longest stay-at-home order in the world. In fact, while the State has been relaxing restrictions on California businesses over the past several weeks, it has tightened restrictions on schools - releasing a new mandatory School Reopening Framework which immediately prohibited the implementation of safe reopening plans that thousands of schools had been preparing for months and were only days away from implementing.

Just weeks ago the CDC stated that “kindergarten through 12 schools should be the last settings to close after all other mitigation measures have been employed and the first to reopen when they can do so safely.” A few weeks later, the State released the new Safe Schools for All Plan, acknowledging that “children do not seem to be major sources of transmission - either to each other or to adults” and that “even in communities with many COVID cases, we do not see many outbreaks in schools.” And yet schools were the first to close in March of 2020 and have yet to reopen across California despite today’s relaxation of restrictions for all adults.

Today’s actions by the State continue to disproportionately punish those who are the least at risk from COVID-19 but who have suffered the most. Children have been home alone for almost a year without access to in-person education, physical activity, organized sports, or even basic social activities with their peers. As the New York Times and Washington Post reported in recent days, there is a devastating mental health crisis occurring in our youth as a result of school closures that is leading many school district to rush to reopen schools, even as California works to keep them closed.

Although the State first announced that the Safe Schools for All Plan would provide funding incentives for reopening schools through a legislative budget proposal, in a matter of weeks the plan was changed into mandatory administrative rulemaking which required immediate compliance, created blanket prohibitions on re-openings for middle and high school students, and removed all of the financial incentives to aid schools with reopening efforts under the Plan.

To add insult to injury, the middle and high school students in the Carlsbad Unified School District were set to return to school today, January 25th, until the District postponed its reopening plan in view of the restrictions in the Framework. Now, hundreds of thousands of children must watch helplessly from home as the State allows practically all other business entities to reopen while their indefinite lockdown continues without any hope of ending.

Parents and community members can learn more at www.parentassociation.org

The Parent Association of North County San Diego is a non-partisan 501(c)3 organization representing parents from seven school districts in North County San Diego including Carlsbad USD, Encinitas EUSD, Poway USD, San Dieguito UHSD, San Marcos USD, Vista USD, and Oceanside USD. The Parent Association's mission is to give parents a voice and a platform to advocate for the best interests of all students.

There is no better advocate for students than a parent.

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