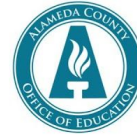


# Joint Statement

Alameda County Office of Education  
Alameda County Public Health Department

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July 17, 2020

Today, [Governor Gavin Newsom laid out his plan](#) for schools across California to physically open or close as the 2020-21 school year approaches. This plan centers on local data and existing metrics to determine if our students and staff can return to classrooms for a new school year.

The Governor's plan and the California Department of Public Health's [updated guidance](#) offer some much-needed clarity for our communities and aid our educational leaders in their decision-making as the 2020-21 school year begins.

The CDPH guidance ties school reopening to overall disease conditions in its county, as tracked by the [State's County Monitoring List](#). Counties are placed on a list when they meet certain thresholds indicating elevated disease conditions, and removed from the list when disease conditions improve. Counties on the Monitoring List are subject to State-ordered restrictions for various sectors. **The ability of school districts to offer in-person instruction is now tied to these county-wide thresholds.**

The full CDPH framework for school reopening can be found [here](#). Some of the new guidelines indicate that:

- Schools can open for in-person instruction when its county has been off the State Monitoring List for 14 consecutive days. **Schools must not open for in-person instruction until that condition has been met.**
- Additionally, the public health guidance recommends staff in every California school be tested for COVID-19 periodically based on local disease trends and as testing capacity allows.

Alameda County was placed on the State's Monitoring List on July 12 due to a COVID-19 case rate above 100 per 100,000 residents over a 14-day period. [Currently the case rate is 122.3.](#)

Until Alameda County is off the State Monitoring List for 14 consecutive days, all Alameda County schools may only provide distance learning to their students.

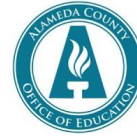
While the new guidance addresses many previously unanswered questions, it also raises many new ones. ACPHD and Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) are seeking clarity from state officials on these questions and many others.

This is not a place that any of us wanted to be to start a new school year. This pandemic continues to present great challenges to our education system. We acknowledge that this has been another period of fast-changing circumstances and that families may be

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feeling confused and overwhelmed by all of the information they have received this summer, and by yet another last-minute shift.

District leaders have worked diligently and thoughtfully to plan and respond with information that changes seemingly daily. And we at ACOE and ACPHD will continue to support them with all available resources as they move into distance learning, including guidance and collaboration in order to ensure that students are provided meaningful and equitable opportunities to learn and succeed in online classrooms.

When the time is right and public health conditions allow, it should be the goal of every district to provide hybrid educational models that include limited in-class opportunities for students to learn and thrive while using proven public health practices and protocols to make school environments as safe as possible for students and staff.

Students need to be in school. Statistics already show us that significant learning loss, compromised social-emotional health, and a precipitous drop in child abuse reporting are among the many factors impacting our children while they are out of school. Our families also depend on services provided by our schools, including meals and health care services.

We realize that when our students and teachers are able to return to classrooms, school will not be a “normal” experience in our COVID reality. It will look, feel and *be* different. But our classrooms remain critical places for learning and growth. And we all look forward to their eventual return.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Karen Monroe'.

**L. Karen Monroe**  
Superintendent of Schools  
Alameda County Office of Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Nicholas Moss'.

**Dr. Nicholas Moss, MD, MPH**  
Interim County Health Officer  
Alameda County Public Health Department