

October 9, 2020

David W. Gordon, Superintendent,
Sacramento County Office of Education

Jorge Aguilar, Superintendent
Sacramento City Unified School District

Chris Evans, Superintendent,
Natomas Unified School District

Steve Martinez, Superintendent
Twin Rivers Unified School District

Gentlemen:

We write this letter on behalf of the approximately 5100 certificated educators who teach in the Natomas Unified School District, Sacramento City Unified School District and Twin Rivers Unified School District. As you are aware, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), recently announced that Sacramento county has transitioned from a the current “Widespread” purple tier to “Substantial” red tier. This means that local districts may start making plans to transition from distance learning to hybrid models, as outlined in SCOE’s June 2, 2020, School Year Planning Guide.

Even if Sacramento county overall can maintain red tier status, our collective position is it is unsafe and inequitable to resume instruction via a hybrid or fully-in-person instructional model until these standards can be achieved in every zip code in the three school districts. Our position from the beginning has been simple: California cannot physically open schools for in-person instruction unless it is safe. The politicization of school reopening and in-person instruction cannot allow us to stray from this core principle and from the science that drives it.

Additionally, there is also a critical issue regarding equity. Educational equity is tied to health equity. We must ensure that there is COVID-19 health equity in all neighborhoods and places across our county before schools return to in-person instruction. Grave health inequities exist related to COVID-19. A disproportionate number of people of color are getting sick and dying

from COVID-19. A simple scan of zip codes across our county shows how the virus has had a devastating impact on low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.

Community COVID-19 conditions must be steadily low in all zip codes and with the necessary public health preparedness in place. When some get a head start, it deepens inequality. And, the rush to open school doors with high background transmission rates places unsafe pressure on low-income communities and our most under-resourced public schools.

We think it is unrealistic to expect those conditions being met in the 2020 calendar year. Unless there is a dramatic improvement in COVID-19 rates and the significant expansion in testing capacity (i.e., regular, on-site, rapid and accessible for students, staff and school families) our school districts cannot physically open in a hybrid model until at least January of 2021.

We look forward to further discussing as we strive to keep our schools, students, and community safe.

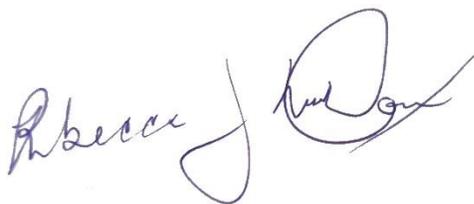
Sincerely,



David Fisher
President, Sacramento City Teachers Association



Brenda Borge
President, Natomas Teachers' Association



Rebecca LeDoux
President, Twin Rivers United Educators