



# California Teachers Empowerment Network

*Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues*

*Please note that in addition to the traditional emailing of the CTEN monthly newsletter, we will once again post it on the CTEN blog - <http://www.ctenteachers.blogspot.com/> As usual, there are several controversial issues covered in this letter and we urge you to share your opinions with other teachers.*

June 17, 2020

Dear Colleague,

Last month's letter began, "Things will get back to normal at some point, but it's anyone's guess as to when and what "normal" will look like." And a month later, that statement still holds. The California state guidelines on schooling in a coronavirus-affected environment were issued last week, and there were 45 pages worth of suggestions.

*Students should expect to wash their hands and have their temperature taken often. They will likely wear masks and only attend classes a few days a week with a small group of classmates. Signs and taped marks on the floor will tell them which direction to walk and where to stand in hallways and in the cafeteria.*

*...The guidance anticipates many districts will offer hybrid or blended models of education, a combination of distance and in-person instruction or a model where some students go to school and others stay home for instruction, Thurmond said at a press conference Monday morning. Many school districts have surveyed parents and learned many want distance learning. Thurmond encouraged districts to accommodate those requests to ensure small class sizes for adequate social distancing.*

It is important to stress that the state guidelines are not mandates It is up to each individual school district to handle matters as they see fit.

Also, as Mike Antonucci reminds us of the union angle in "Want to Reopen Schools? Better Be Ready to Bargain."

*Here in California, state officials have made it clear that they will issue guidelines for school reopenings, but the ultimate decision will be left to the individual districts. In the eyes of the California Teachers Association, that means collective bargaining.*

*Last week CTA issued its stance on school reopenings, listing those things the union wants to see in place before returning to work. These included precautions with consensus agreement, like face masks, deep cleaning, physical distancing and hand washing.*

To continue reading the summary, as provided by *EdSource*, go [here](#). To access the complete 45-page state guidebook, go [here](#). To read about the collective bargaining angle, go [here](#).

Then, there are different takes on the school funding issue. The *Los Angeles Times* maintains, “California schools face ‘devastating’ coronavirus cuts as they struggle to reopen.”

*Even as costs skyrocket in response to the coronavirus crisis, California school districts face major funding cuts that could potentially lead to teacher and staff layoffs and leave some schools struggling to safely reopen campuses in the fall, according to district officials and educators.*

*The proposed budget hit to schools, about \$19 billion split over the next two years, worsens their existing financial challenges and does little to help with pandemic-related costs.*

However, *EdSource* disagrees, insisting that “Most California districts would get more in federal aid than they’d lose in budget cuts.”

*Through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act that Congress passed in March, California’s K-12 schools would receive enough to cover more than 90% of the \$6.4 billion that Newsom is proposing to cut from school districts’ and charter schools’ funding in the next state budget to make up for a massive projected decline in tax revenue.*

*Newsom is proposing a cut of approximately 8% of districts’ general fund, known as the Local Control Funding Formula. It provides a base amount and additional funding for “high-needs” students: English learners, and low-income, homeless and foster students in every district. Federal aid makes up for state cuts for some California districts*

*...An EdSource analysis projects that of the 897 districts that receive their funding through the funding formula, 546 school districts and county offices of education — 60.4% of the total — would get more CARES Act funding than they’d lose in cuts to the funding formula. These numbers don’t include the 100-plus mostly wealthy “basic aid” districts excluded from the Local Control Funding Formula because their property tax revenues exceed what they would get through the formula.*

While the amount of money districts will receive remains unknown, Los Angeles and San Diego have taken a stand, claiming that they won’t open if their budgets are cut.

*The LA and San Diego school districts are among the 1,000 districts in California that would also be impacted by the 19% reduction in funding for K-12 education proposed by Newsom this month.*

The districts’ superintendents said in a statement that Newsom’s proposed budget falls short of the necessary funding to properly staff and sanitize schools to reopen.

*“More teachers and staff will be needed to do this extra work in schools and to provide both in school and online learning programs,” the statement said. “And the governor’s proposed cuts*

*for public education in the May revise to the 2020-21 state budget come at a time when schools are being asked to do more — not less — to deliver a quality education for students.”*

To learn more, go [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Some recent polling throws some very interesting ingredients into the reopening stew. In late May, a USA TODAY-Ipsos poll was released which revealed that 18% teachers in the United States say they are unlikely to return to in-person instruction if schools reopen in the fall.

*New polling from USA TODAY and Ipsos found that some teachers are concerned that even a return date in fall is still too risky. Roughly one in five (18%) of teachers surveyed said they would leave their job if asked to return in-person in the fall. Among those 55 and older, which correlates to the teachers with the most experience, as well as the ones who might be more susceptible to complications from the coronavirus due to their age, the number rose to one in four (25%).*

*The data comes from a poll of 505 educators who teach kindergarten through high school.*

To learn more, go [here](#).

But then again, there may be fewer kids to teach. A Real Clear Opinion Research survey shows that support for homeschooling is strong, “The results show that 40% of families are more likely to homeschool or virtual school after lockdowns.”

Also, EdChoice, a national organization that advocates for state-based school choice programs, joined with technology company Morning Consult to poll American K-12 parents on how the coronavirus crisis has affected them and their children, particularly regarding education.

*Because many more American parents are engaged in at-home schooling with their children, the survey asked, “How have your opinions on homeschooling changed as a result of the coronavirus?”*

*Among parents participating in the poll, 52 percent said their view of homeschooling was “more favorable,” with 28 percent labeling their opinion as “much more favorable,” and 24 percent stating their view was “somewhat more favorable.”*

*Of those parents who responded with a “less favorable” opinion of homeschooling, 18 percent said their view was “somewhat less favorable” and 8 percent said it was “much less favorable,” while 22 percent either did not know their view or had no opinion.*

To learn more about the two polls, go [here](#) and [here](#).

In addition to homeschooling, another way to deal with the pandemic would be to give every child a virtual backpack. As Center of Education Reform president Jeanne Allen explains,

*This virus has shown that education needn't be "place-based," or dependent on a specific classroom, with a set number of students in order to be learning. Helping a student master a grade-appropriate level of competency in a subject is more important than whether they're in a classroom for a certain period of time.*

*We must make the student our only unit of learning and give every student a virtual backpack that contains all they need to be educated. That backpack must include a device, a hotspot, basic supplies, a meal, and a ticket that gains them access anywhere to any school that has room - public, private, or charter. The funds that the student has "earned" for his or her district would be paid to the receiving school. The only requirement, as long as students are remote and until issues of accountability can be determined, is that the students' attendance, activities, and results (grades or otherwise) be reported through the school to the state and isolated for that period of time.*

To read more about Allen's plan, go [here](#).

If you have any valuable resources that you would like to share, or talk about what your school district is doing to deal with the "new normal," please do so by emailing [cteninfo@ctenhome.org](mailto:cteninfo@ctenhome.org) or posting on Facebook if you prefer. The CTEN page can be accessed [here](#), and the CTEN group can be found [here](#).

Best of luck to all of you, your families and your students during these very trying times.

Sincerely,  
Larry Sand  
CTEN President