

1 [Urging Prioritization of Public-School Educators for COVID-19 Vaccine Access]

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3 **Resolution urging Governor Newsom and the California Department of Public Health to**  
4 **prioritize California public school educators for phase one COVID-19 vaccine access.**

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6 WHEREAS, As of Monday November 30, 2020, the California Department of Public  
7 Health has reported at least 1,198,934 confirmed COVID-19 cases in California, and a total of  
8 19,121 deaths in the state; and

9 WHEREAS, In the early stages of the pandemic, local and state public health orders  
10 required the closure of public schools across the state to slow the spread of coronavirus in the  
11 community; and

12 WHEREAS, Despite the unprecedented nature of the public health crisis, school  
13 districts and educators across the state stepped up and adapted to the significant challenges  
14 caused by school closures by shifting towards new online distance learning formats; and

15 WHEREAS, Even with innovative distance learning measures put in place, COVID-19  
16 school disruptions have had an adverse effect on K-12 learning, especially among low-income  
17 students and students of color; and

18 WHEREAS, While schools have been closed for nearly 9 months, state officials have  
19 failed to prioritize enough resources to support safe school reopening as a part of the state's  
20 COVID recovery efforts and many school districts remain closed with no clear timelines or  
21 commitments for reopening in the near future; and

22 WHEREAS, Public school enrollment has begun to decline across the state and  
23 country, with many families being forced to leave public school districts to enroll in private and  
24 independent schools systems that have managed to reopen schools with government  
25 authorization and safety protocols in place; and

1           WHEREAS, School closures have had extreme ramifications on student achievement  
2 including cutting student learning time, limiting the ability of educators to provide their usual  
3 level of support, diminishing opportunities for students to develop their social and emotional  
4 skills, and increasing rates of anxiety, depression, obesity, and other serious health conditions  
5 among students; and

6           WHEREAS, These educational consequences from school closures are exponentially  
7 worse at understaffed and underfunded schools across the state that traditionally serve large  
8 populations of students of color and their families, who were already facing stark achievement  
9 gaps prior to the COVID crisis; and

10           WHEREAS, The disproportionate health and economic impacts of COVID-19 on Black,  
11 Latino, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Native American families, including higher rates of job  
12 loss and COVID-19 infections compounded by limited access to technology and reliable  
13 internet access, have only exacerbated the educational challenges that students of color have  
14 had to endure during this crisis; and

15           WHEREAS, To not act with greater urgency to resolve these disruptions to the public  
16 education system, then the severe learning deficits caused by school closures could have  
17 lasting impacts on our students including persistent behavioral and academic challenges,  
18 grade repetition, and increases in school truancy, suspension, expulsion, and dropouts rates  
19 longer term; and

20           WHEREAS, For many working families, the continued closure of schools has forced  
21 many parents and caregivers to make an impossible choice between leaving their jobs and  
22 foregoing their family's income, or leaving their children home alone without the care or  
23 supervision of an adult; and

24           WHEREAS, There is general agreement among parents, educators, school  
25 administrators, and public health professionals that schools should be able to reopen as long

1 as the rates of COVID-19 transmission remain low in the general population, and there is  
2 adequate school testing, screening, monitoring, sanitation, personal protective equipment,  
3 and emergency response protocols in place to ensure that educators and students can safely  
4 return to an in-person school setting; and

5 WHEREAS, Providing vaccines to all school site personnel, including teachers,  
6 paraprofessionals, janitors, and other support staff, will be key to reopening schools safety  
7 and efficiently; and

8 WHEREAS, Several pharmaceutical companies have released recent reports showing  
9 promising results that vaccines protecting against the COVID-19 virus may become available  
10 to priority populations as early as December 2020 following authorization from the U.S. Food  
11 and Drug Administration; and

12 WHEREAS, According to the National Institutes of Health, there are enough vaccines  
13 available to vaccinate up to 20 million people in the United States in December and those  
14 doses are likely to be distributed based on state conditions and population size; and

15 WHEREAS, Because initial vaccine supply will be limited, California state health  
16 officials are developing a phased distribution plan in partnership with the U.S. Centers for  
17 Disease Control and Prevention that will establish the priority populations for vaccination; and

18 WHEREAS, The state has indicated that health care workers and first responders who  
19 are likely to treat or be exposed to COVID-19 patients are expected to be the first phase of  
20 vaccine recipients, and these workers are being divided into subgroups in case of a shortage  
21 in the first rounds; and

22 WHEREAS, The definition of an essential worker in the distribution guidance is still  
23 being developed by state health officials; and

24 WHEREAS, Public School educators are arguably among the most essential workers  
25 in the society as they not only provide an education, but also serve to protect children from

1 hunger and other social ills, give children purpose, set them up for success as citizens, and  
2 inspire them to succeed in life; and

3 WHEREAS, While educators are generally considered essential workers, it is still  
4 unclear where educators will fall in the state's priority ranking, which will be decided in the  
5 coming weeks; and

6 WHEREAS, European countries like France have prioritized keeping schools open  
7 citing their commitments to minimize the academic harm of school closures, while the United  
8 States has prioritized reopening bars and retail establishments as schools have remained  
9 closed; and

10 WHEREAS, Education is the cornerstone of democracy, and at a time when  
11 democratic institutions are under attack, there is a moral obligation to protect the integrity of  
12 educational institutions by ensuring that they are well resourced and equipped to overcome  
13 the current and future challenges presented by the COVID-19 health crisis; now, therefore, be  
14 it,

15 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges Governor Newsom,  
16 the California Department of Public Health, and all other state health officials to prioritize the  
17 recovery of our public education system by providing teachers and school support staff with  
18 vaccines immediately after health care professionals so that we can safely reopen schools  
19 and get students back into the classroom as soon as possible; and be it,

20 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges Governor  
21 Newsom, the California Department of Public Health, and all other state health officials to  
22 ensure that the costs of COVID-19 vaccines for all educators and school support staff be  
23 subsidized by our state and federal government to ensure equitable and timely access to  
24 these vaccines; and be it,

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1           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby directs  
2 the Clerk of the Board to transmit copies to the Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom and to  
3 the California Department of Public Health with a request to take all actions necessary to  
4 achieve the objectives of this Resolution.

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