

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, For decades, California public schools have struggled with systemic
23 underfunding by the state resulting in one of the lowest per pupil spending rates relative to the
24 rest of the nation; and

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

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

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

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

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

24 WHEREAS, For many working families, the continued closure of schools has forced
25 many parents and caregivers to make an impossible choice between leaving their jobs and

1 forego their family's income, or leaving their children home alone without the care or
2 supervision of an adult; and

3 WHEREAS, There is general agreement among parents, educators, school
4 administrators, and public health professionals that schools should be able to reopen as long
5 as the rates of COVID-19 transmission remain low in the general population, and there is
6 adequate school testing, screening, monitoring, sanitation, personal protective equipment,
7 and emergency response protocols in place to ensure that educators and students can safely
8 return to an in-person school setting; and

9 WHEREAS, Providing vaccines to all school site personnel, including teachers,
10 paraeducators, librarians, counselors, nurses, janitors, and other support staff, will be key to
11 reopening schools safely and efficiently; and

12 WHEREAS, Vaccine access, in addition to proper testing, contact tracing, ventilation,
13 PPE, and sanitation protocols, is another important measure for preventing school-based
14 outbreaks and protecting students, families, and educators alike; and

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

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

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

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

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

7 WHEREAS, Public School educators are arguably among the most essential workers
8 in the society as they not only provide an education, but also serve to protect children from
9 hunger and other social ills, give children purpose, set them up for success as citizens, and
10 inspire them to succeed in life; and

11 WHEREAS, While educators are generally considered essential workers, it is still
12 unclear where educators will fall in the state’s priority ranking, which will be decided in the
13 coming weeks; and

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

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

23 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges Governor Newsom,
24 the California Department of Public Health, and all other state health officials to prioritize the
25 recovery of our public education system by providing teachers and school support staff with

1 vaccines immediately after health care professionals and long-term care facilities so that we
2 can safely reopen schools and get students back into the classroom as soon as possible; and
3 be it,

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

9 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges Governor
10 Newsom to provide increased state investments in public schools over the coming years to
11 support the recovery and resilience of California’s public education system; and be it

12 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors will continue to
13 offer support and resources to the San Francisco Unified School District to ensure a layered
14 COVID-19 prevention plan in every school that includes: on-site testing programs; improved
15 ventilation, filtration, and indoor air quality; small and stable student cohorts to prevent the risk
16 of outbreaks; and well-coordinated vaccination efforts that provide school staff, students, and
17 families with easy access to vaccines as they become available, such as school-based
18 vaccination sites; and be it,

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

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