

California schoolnews

Weekly Update

September 8, 2021

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COVID-19 update: CDPH updates K-12 guidance on extracurriculars, quarantine



On Sept. 1, the California Department of Public Health released several updates to the [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2021–22 School Year](#). The updates included recommendations and requirements for school-based extracurricular activities and further clarification on the modified quarantine recommendations. For quarantine

recommendations, clarifying revisions were made to Section 8 on modified quarantine to confirm the setting of exposure can be outdoors or indoors; and clarifying revisions were made to Section 9 to confirm that this section applies to students in either modified or standard quarantine.

Additionally, Section 16 was added, addressing school-based extracurricular activities, including sports and the playing of musical instruments. This section notes that masks are required for all persons while playing all indoor sports, unless wearing a mask during play has been determined to pose a choking hazard by a well-recognized health authority like the American Academy of Pediatrics. For the playing of musical instruments that cannot be done with a face covering — or when wearing a mask during play poses a choking hazard — at least one of the following options is required: conducting activities outdoors; using modified face coverings and bell coverings when playing wind and brass instruments, maintaining 6 feet of physical distancing and/or performing at least weekly screening testing of all individuals, including those who are fully vaccinated. [Read more on the CDPH website »](#)

In other COVID-19 developments:

- In response to questions around independent study and quarantines from school leaders across the state and [recent advocacy from CSBA](#), the Newsom administration and the Legislature are working on clean-up legislation addressing the independent study statute in the education trailer bill (Assembly Bill 130). According to an email sent to state education leaders from State Board of Education Executive Director Brooks Allen, the legislation will clarify that public schools may use independent study to serve students during quarantine and will ensure that local educational agencies are funded for independent study provided while a student is quarantined, beginning on day one of the quarantine. In addition, [EdSource reported](#) that local educational agencies will be eligible for funding without providing instruction during students' quarantine if they are experiencing a staff shortage. This exception requires the LEA prove it has exhausted strategies to staff positions. While these are important steps in providing LEAs with at least

some of the support needed to provide a high-quality education to every student, **CSBA will continue to advocate for further changes to independent study.**

- On Aug. 25, the California Department of Education hosted a webinar on “Safe and Successful Schools” featuring speakers Dr. Naomi Bardach of the California Department of Public Health’s Safe Schools for All team and State Board of Education President Linda Darling-Hammond. **Topics included public health data and information relevant to back-to-school classroom reopenings, school and community mitigation efforts, how COVID-19 is affecting schools, and trends and resources related to testing, vaccination and quarantine efforts.** [View the slides](#) | [View the webinar](#) »
- The U.S. Department of Education report “Strategies for Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Address the Impact of Lost Instructional Time” was released in late August. **The 29-page document contains information for local educational agencies on re-engaging students by meeting their social, emotional, mental health and academic needs; supporting parents and caregivers in their child’s success; and using high-quality assessments to support student learning.** [Read the report](#) »

CSBA webinar to explore governing in turbulent times



Join CSBA, district officials and Safe Schools for All Team lead Dr. Naomi Bardach on **Monday, Sept. 13 at 10 a.m. for the webinar, “Governing in a Time of Chaos: Board Meetings in the Age of COVID and CRT.”** Trustees are navigating another challenging back-to-school season and **managing tensions at board meetings and beyond over issues**

like COVID-19 mitigation strategies, independent study, learning recovery and debates on topics such as ethnic studies and critical race theory. Emotions are running high and governance teams are bearing the brunt of it, particularly as they try to hold productive board meetings and set policy for these difficult times. **CSBA has organized a diverse group of panelists to share their experiences and provide resources that will help trustees manage board meetings and perform their essential duties for students, families and communities.** [Learn more and register](#) »

CSBA CEO & Executive Director addresses AB 438 layoff notice legislation in commentary



Penned by CSBA CEO & Executive Director Vernon Billy, **“Tightening layoff law would further squeeze school districts’ ability to budget,”** was published by *EdSource* on Sept. 7. The commentary about **Assembly Bill 438 (Reyes, D-San Bernardino)** explains that the legislation **“would force districts to determine which support staff to retain three**

months before the state budget is passed, four months before the education budget trailer bill is adopted, and six months before the school year begins.” Though funding from the state budget typically isn’t decided until June or July, districts must make staffing decisions — **which account for 80 to 90 percent of total school district budgets** — months prior. Currently, LEAs are required to provide classified staff with a 60-day notice prior to any layoff. Designed by school unions, AB 438 would eliminate the current 60-day layoff notice and establish an immovable date of March 15 by which school districts must decide whether to lay off classified staff. **“This system would eliminate any remaining flexibility school districts have to make accurate personnel decisions and preserve jobs once they have a clearer picture of state funding and enrollment for the coming school year,”** Billy writes. [Read more](#) »

Legislative update: End-of-session bills of interest



The 2021 legislative year is winding down, but a number of important education-related items are still before the Legislature as the Sept. 10 deadline to pass legislation approaches. CSBA is monitoring and advocating on a number of bills, including:

- **Assembly Bill 361** (Rivas, D-Salinas): Would continue the authority granted during the COVID-19 crisis and allow local agencies, including school boards, to meet remotely during a declared state of emergency. AB 361 is in the Senate awaiting consideration by the full Senate. **CSBA Position: Support**
- **AB 438** (Reyes, D-San Bernardino): Would eliminate the existing 60-day layoff notice requirements for classified staff and instead require school districts to issue classified staff layoff notices by March 15, which is the same layoff notice date afforded to certificated employees. It would also provide that any future layoff notice or hearing rights afforded to certificated staff in future years would automatically extend to classified staff. AB 438 passed the Senate yesterday and returns today for final consideration in the full Assembly. **CSBA Position: Oppose**
- **AB 824** (Bennett, D-Santa Barbara): Establishes a process for county boards of education and charter schools to appoint one or more high school pupils as student members of their governing bodies in response to a student petition. AB 824 passed the Legislature and is on its way to the Governor's desk for his consideration. **CSBA Position: Support**

After the session concludes on Sept. 10, Gov. Gavin Newsom will have until Oct. 10 to sign or veto legislation.

Board member commentary: More state support needed for contract tracing and testing



As part of CSBA's ongoing **School Boards in Action** campaign, Ty Alper, president of Berkeley Unified School District's Board of Education, is sharing a first-hand account of how the district is keeping students in schools, even as COVID-19 cases rise. Alper notes that a comprehensive testing operation is a major component that has allowed the school to

successfully implement the state's "modified quarantine" guidance, which allows unvaccinated, asymptomatic, masked students who have had contact with a positive case to stay in classrooms if they test negative twice a week during the quarantine period.

Testing, however, is expensive and "public school districts in California have not been given sufficient resources to take on this challenge."

Berkeley USD has hired 17 full-time staff, including nurses, testing technicians and calling center staff (needed to rapidly deploy testing staff), and is looking to hire more. "Right now, Berkeley USD is managing to keep kids in school. We have over 500 students in school currently on modified quarantine, and only a handful at home on full quarantine.

That's over 500 kids who would be home were it not for our testing regime," Alper said. **"But anything that undermines our ability to implement this testing regime will likely result in children staying home from school on quarantine. And we are getting buried by the human and financial resources that the testing requires."**

[Read more on the CSBA blog »](#)

Toolkit available to assess and plan for local literacy needs



California is taking next steps in its quest to improve literacy for the state's more than 6 million students. The California Department of Education is partnering with California Educators Together to **provide the Local Literacy Planning Toolkit**, which may be used by local educational agencies to evaluate current literacy programs and supports and develop steps to move toward

innovative and sustainable programs. **The toolkit's aim is to facilitate a discussion about literacy in LEAs, including gathering stakeholders, evaluating literacy data, selecting evidence-based instructional strategies, planning for implementation and aligning the local literacy plan to the LEA's Local Control and Accountability Plan process.**

On Aug. 27, [CDE announced seven grant awards to county offices of education or consortia of COEs to serve as Local Literacy Lead Agencies](#) as part of the [Comprehensive Literacy State Development](#) federal grant program. Grantees will use the funding to build expertise in strategies that address the statewide literacy priorities identified in the [State Literacy Plan](#) and implement these strategies through a three-year, small-scale pilot with one or more local districts. [Read more on the CSBA blog »](#)

Let Total School Solutions help with your Facilities Master Plan



Does your facilities support your educational and programmatic goals? A **Facilities Master Plan** provides a district with vital information regarding current and future needs for student housing, quality of existing facilities, and facilities renovation and expansion requirements to meet the district's

educational and programmatic goals. The master plan also assists the district in identifying funding needs for capital improvement and developing financing options. Total School Solutions facilities master plans include accurate projections regarding enrollment, careful determination of school site capacity, educational specifications to ensure programmatic needs are served, a detailed need assessment, and conclusions and recommendations about the availability and timing of financing and funding. [Learn more »](#)

COVID-19 resources

Stay up to date with the latest news and resources related to COVID-19 on [CSBA's dedicated webpage](#) and with articles frequently posted on the newly redesigned [CSBA blog](#).

Virtual events

MIG Course 2: Student Learning & Achievement/Policy & Judicial Review
September 17-18 | [Register here](#)

MIG COE Course 2: Student Learning & Achievement/Policy & Judicial Review
September 23 and 25 | [Register here](#)

2021 CCSA Virtual Fall Workshop
September 24 | [Register here](#)

Governance with an Equity Lens - 2021
September 25-November 6 | [Register here](#)

In-person events

MIG 1: Foundations of Effective Governance | Setting Direction
September 24 | [Register here](#)

MIG 2: Student Learning & Achievement/Policy & Judicial Review
September 25 | [Register here](#)

[View complete calendar](#)

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