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President Patzkowski Testifies on Re-Opening Schools at Senate



The following are the remarks delivered by President Doug Patzkowski at a State Senate Education Committee Hearing on the Re-Opening of Schools Thursday, January 21.

There is no elephant in the room today. There is something far smaller and far more insidious, and it doesn't have a seat at the table to negotiate. It is the Covid-19 virus. Los Angeles County, where our schools are located, is currently in the Purple Tier, and our medical facilities are nearly at capacity. The virus is unaware of the governor's timeline, and it continues to reproduce itself. We need to halt the dangerously high rates of transmission. Although we anticipate that educators will be able to receive the vaccine as soon as members of Tier 1b are eligible, we do not know at this time when sufficient quantities of the vaccine will be available to inoculate them.

Another issue that is significant is equity. The governor's plan to designate \$2 billion of Prop. 98 funds intended for education to provide additional resources to LEAs that are able to follow his timeline for reopening schools is inherently inequitable. LEAs in large urban areas such as Los Angeles County will be penalized because the high transmission rates in their area prevent them from reopening safely. \$2 billion is a significant sum to be removed from the overall education budget and redistributed to those LEAs in safer areas where reopening may be feasible. Students living in high population density areas will be harmed, because funding for their schools, which cannot reopen safely, will be reduced.

We all agree that the primary responsibility of our schools is to provide a safe and secure learning environment for our students, teachers, and all other employees. The studies presented at today's meeting are based on limited research. We still don't know enough about transmission in schools to be able to assure the safety of everyone, even if we did have all of the PPE in place, which we do not. Our schools are not yet ready to reopen. Covid-19 continues to be the unprecedented health threat of our lifetime, with no end in sight. The virus doesn't negotiate with us. We shouldn't try to negotiate with it. I urge you to reject the governor's proposal.

BoE Will Offer School Facilities to T.I.M.E. and Kipp Charter Schools

Proposition 39 is a state law passed in 2000, which requires district to make facilities (including both classroom and non-classroom spaces) available to public charter schools. Districts must offer facilities sufficient for the a charter school to accommodate all of its in-district students in conditions reasonably equivalent to those in which the students would be accommodate if they were attending other schools in the District. **Both T.I.M.E. and Kipp have applied for district facilities under Proposition 39. The Board of Education will consider options at a meeting Wednesday, January 27 at 3:30 p.m.**

After being denied by the District and the County Office, T.I.M.E. Community Charter School (serving grades 9-12) was approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) Thursday, July 9. In an action June 16 the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Board approved the KIPP SoCal LEA 16 charter (elementary) school petition that was previously denied by the MUSD Board of Education.