



FLOOR ALERT June 3, 2020

Ensure safeguards are in place to protect students' access to public education

Students need and deserve more than the emergency education they have received since March 2020, and it is essential that state policymakers ensure *at least* minimum standards are put in place to protect students' constitutionally guaranteed access to a public education. As a coalition of civil rights, parent, community and student groups we are deeply concerned about the social and emotional impact of the pandemic and recent learning loss, particularly for the students hardest hit by the crisis: low-income students, students of color and English learners. We are committed to preventing further learning loss for the upcoming school year and therefore we seek the support of state policymakers to create a framework for instructional continuity.

Specifically, we call on the Legislature to:

- Reject any efforts to waive instructional minutes, days and year unless there is a framework and criteria in place to ensure there are minimum safeguards for all students that exceed what some students have experienced over the last 10 weeks. This includes - similar to key provisions in the Senate ADA hold harmless proposal - requiring LEAs seeking flexibility from instructional requirements to develop and post Instructional Continuity Plans that outline strategies to:
 - Delineate how stakeholders have been engaged in the plan development process;
 - Assess the extent to which students may have experienced or be experiencing learning loss or trauma during the COVID-19 period, as well as undergo a follow up assessment for each affected student;
 - Provide access to a full curriculum of substantially similar quality regardless of the method of delivery, including specific actions to provide accommodations for unique student groups, including English learners, special education students and students who are not performing at grade level or who have experienced trauma;
 - Track student’s daily participation, ensure a meaningful level of attendance and engagement;
 - If all instruction is through distance learning, provide daily synchronous learning opportunities – when teachers and students learn online together – for all students. Students must have an opportunity to connect with their teachers and other students;
 - If a hybrid method of school is available, then distance learning should be implemented to complement in class instruction at home not to supplant it while in school.
 - Provide resources for families to help them support their child in distance learning in the languages spoken by the parents; and
 - Report the assessment and progress of students to inform instruction and provide transparency to the public and policymakers.
- Set a common minimum standard of no fewer than 175 instructional days in a school year in the event schools must close due to future COVID 19 outbreaks.
- Ensure students have access to devices and reliable internet service, and schools have platforms in place to support distance learning. Ensure parents and students have access to training on all platforms in the languages spoken by the parents. They are foundational to ensuring children have access to a quality public education.
- Ensure that students have the school supplies they need at home to complete all assignments.
- Ensure hard-to-reach students have access to interventions to address attendance, rather than face punitive actions.
- Establish a mechanism whereby the CDE, CCEE, and county offices intervene to correct egregious LEA underperformance in high quality distance learning.

California must reaffirm its commitment to students and make certain they are not denied access to a public education.

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