

# Community Priorities Coalition

## Statement on the Impact of COVID-19 on SCUSD Students

January 20, 2022

The Sacramento City Community Priorities Coalition (CPC) is very concerned about the quality of education for children in the Sacramento City Unified School District. We recognize that the district, parents, and students are in very difficult times with the impact of COVID-19, but while the school doors are open, the education is fractured. That is not okay.

The CPC has deep concerns about the following issues that must be addressed to address increasing learning loss of students, particularly for students who are academically behind and emotionally scarred by the pandemic.

We particularly concerned about the following:

- Since classes resumed after the Winter break, the number of students without a regular teacher in SCUSD grew to over 15,000. Many students are attending day and after-school classes in which their teachers (or substitutes) are not available.
- We know that up to 40% of students in SCUSD schools are being shuffled into combined subject classes, and even in larger gym spaces. There is no curriculum for such mixed classes. Even a skilled teacher would have difficulty deciding what to teach and at which grade level. That is crowd control, not in person learning.
- Ignoring the emergence of a second wave of COVID-19 and the omicron variant, the district also made a poor decision to return to in-person classes and abandon remote learning for students and teachers who are quarantined or choose not to return to schools because of the pandemic.
- There are no apparent protocols for dealing with COVID health crisis. There's no formal COVID testing or consistent tracking of COVID infections. This puts teachers, staff, and students at greater risks. And it's difficult to reduce the spread of the virus in schools when there's not adequate social distancing or ventilators in classrooms.

# Community Priorities Coalition

- We're also deeply concerned about the learning loss of students. The district hasn't reported on the academic and social-emotional impact of the pandemic on students, particularly among Black and Hispanic students with disabilities.

## Our Recommendations

While we understand the challenges the district is facing, we are calling for SCUSD to close impacted schools, especially high schools for two weeks so alternative plans can be developed. Because what's taking place now is clearly not working.

Alternative plans might include the following:

- Return to a hybrid model of remote and in-classroom in order to serve students and teachers who choose not to return to school and who are in quarantine because of COVID infections.
- Start the development of a Virtual Academy for “students who qualify as medically fragile with documented health conditions or medical needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.”
- Lower class sizes. Spreading children out, not grouping them together.
- Increase the physical and mental health support for students. Increase health professionals on site at each school where there is an outbreak and improved ventilation.
- N-95 and K-95 masks for all teachers, staff and students.
- Require weekly testing for all unvaccinated teachers, staff and students.
- For teachers and staff: If you are sick, stay home. Remain at home until you complete the recommended quarantine. You should isolate for the full time needed to heal. You should test negative for the virus prior to returning to the classroom. Early returning to the school spreads the virus and places everyone at risk.
- For Parents: If your child does not have 24 or fewer students in the classroom, with a credentialed teacher, we recommend that you consider keeping your child safe at home for a few weeks – until the district creates and implements a responsible plan including no merged classes, expanding testing and optimal personal protective equipment.

You should also insist during this time on the return of at least some form of on-line instruction for the Spring semester, until schools are safe. The district does have an independent study program you might consider for your child to learn from home.

# Community Priorities Coalition

For more information contact Carl Pinkston, BPSB, [info@blackparallelschoolboard.com](mailto:info@blackparallelschoolboard.com) or to the website: <https://blackparallelschoolboard.com/program/lcflcap/community-priority-coalition/>

Signed,  
Black Parallel School Board, Building Healthy Communities, Tower of Youth,  
Democracy and Education Institute and League of United Latin American Citizens  
(LULAC, 2862)