



Contact: Janice Rombeck

Office of Supervisor Dave Cortese
70 West Hedding Street, San Jose, CA 95110
408-299-5030; 408-803-2095 (cell)
Janice.rombeck@bos.sccgov.org

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Supervisor Dave Cortese sent the following letter today to Governor Gavin Newsom concerning school funding and the spread of COVID-19:

Re: Emergency Funding for Basic-Aid School Districts to Allow for Online Learning

Dear Governor Newsom,

Thank you for your leadership in helping to counter the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in our State. In particular, I would like to applaud you for your recent call for a moratorium on large gatherings across the State. Just yesterday, I called for a similar ban on gatherings of 200 people or more given the recent confirmation of at least 48 cases of COVID-19 in Santa Clara County.

As many businesses, workspaces, government offices, and college campuses in our County transition to online and remote work and study operations, our public K-12 schools continue to operate as usual. While I agree with our County Public Health Department's recommendation to not close schools at this time, the impact that the COVID-19 emergency is having on our public-school system cannot go unaddressed. Not only have schools in our community postponed and canceled many upcoming activities and travel as a precautionary measure, many parents and caretakers have pulled their students out of school to not risk contraction for those children that may have an underlying health condition or weakened immune system.

In just the near-term, these justified reactions to COVID-19 will have a major impact on the funding of our non-Basic Aid school districts that rely on student Average Daily Attendance (ADA) rates to determine their general-purpose funding. In the wake of this public health pandemic, our schools will have to grapple with budget shortages that can exacerbate our current declining enrollment and funding shortfalls.

As a Santa Clara County Supervisor, I am urging you to:

- 1. Create a State-controlled emergency fund that can cover potential losses incurred for non-Basic Aid school districts due to lower ADA rates in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.**
- 2. Temporarily waive the requirement of physical classroom attendance when calculating student ADA to allow for equivalent online and/or remote schoolwork to count towards attendance.**

Our Public Health Department has taken unprecedented steps to slow the spread of COVID-19 and especially protect those who are most vulnerable to severe illness. As this situation develops, we will continue take proactive steps to serve our community safely and effectively. Each of us have a role to play. I look forward to working with you to move forward these important initiatives.

Sincerely,
Dave Cortese
Supervisor, District Three
County of Santa Clara

For more information, call the Office of Supervisor Dave Cortese at 408-299-5030.