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| Arcata Elementary Teachers Association          | Freshwater Teachers Association      | McKinleyville Teachers Association          |
| Blue Lake Union Elementary School Teachers/NHTA | Humboldt Bay Teachers Association    | Northern Humboldt H.S. Teachers Association |
| Del Norte Teachers Association                  | Hydesville Teachers Association      | Rio Dell Teachers Association               |
| Eureka Teachers Association                     | Jacoby Creek Teachers Association    | South Bay Teachers Association              |
| Ferndale Union Teachers Association             | Klamath-Trinity Teachers Association | Southern Humboldt Teachers Association      |
| Fortuna Elementary Teachers Association         | Loleta Teachers Association          | Teachers Association of Pacific Union       |
| Fortuna Union High School Teachers Association  | Mattole Valley Teachers Association  | Trinidad Teachers Association               |

## 1,100+ Educators United Because in Humboldt & Del Norte Counties All Students Need Safe & Healthy Schools

An open letter for safe and healthy schools:

Our students, educators, and their families have experienced unprecedented challenges and difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students have had their educational environments interrupted, and educators have worked tirelessly to address their students' academic, socio-emotional, and physical health needs while also having to care for their own families at home.

### Community Support

All students need community support in providing a safe and healthy school as we work together to re-open and grow the economy. The successes we have achieved so-far are due to the dedication and sacrifices of educators, parents, and students working together with supportive administrators. We must maintain successful collaboration and negotiation where it has occurred.

Unfortunately, not all students received a consistently equitable education as a result of crisis learning. We call on all districts to adequately support students, educators, and their families in order to provide the most safe and healthy learning environments during this pandemic. We expect that educators, administrators, and communities in all of Humboldt & Del Norte's school districts will come together as we work to provide the best possible educational experience for the 2020-2021 school year.

Humboldt & Del Norte County Educators call for all students, parents, school leaders, and communities to unite because all students need safe and healthy schools.

### Safe & Healthy Schools

The health and safety of our students, educators, and families is paramount as we return to school. No future is secure without health and safety in place. Doing so requires:

- Decisions and plans for re-opening of schools to be based on medical science combined with educational best-practices to maximize students' health and safety;
- Current Humboldt & Del Norte County Health Departments, Cal-OSHA, and CDC guidelines are the minimum levels to be guaranteed and enacted which include, but not limited to the following:

- Reduced student class size cohorts
  - Social/Physical Distancing at all times and limited interactions of people at school sites
  - Hand-washing stations being properly supplied
  - Essential Protective Equipment (masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, soap, water) being provided
  - COVID-19 Testing being available for students and educators while ensuring medical confidentiality
  - County, State, and Federal guidelines being shared with educators, parents, and administrators as the recommendations change.
- Establishing clear protocols when someone is sick (students and staff), communicating protocols to students, parents, and educators, and ensuring all protocols are followed;
  - Creating district and site-based plans to limit symptomatic and asymptomatic spread of COVID-19;
  - Providing fully-paid COVID-19 FMLA Leave to guarantee educators do not feel pressure to come to work if sick;
  - Daily cleaning and disinfecting protocols being in place;
  - Ensuring safe and clean classrooms and common areas at all times;
  - Implementing age-appropriate safety measures that may vary between grade levels and school sites;
  - Safety trainings be done for our students and educators prior to or upon returning to schools; and
  - All safety issues are bargained by educators' unions with their respective district to ensure students, educators and administrators remain safe and healthy at school.

## Effective Classroom Learning Environments

Our students' education is vitally important and must ensure maximum academic and social-emotional growth for all the students we serve. District's plans for instruction to resume need to be based on the needs of students at every grade level, must recognize and respond to the challenges educators face in providing distance learning instruction, and must provide educators the freedom to design and implement lessons, assessments, and feedback to students that is educationally sound at all times. Professional educators know what best-practices are for our students and always strive to advance our students' educational performance.

- Educators' voices along with the needs of students, parents, and administrators must drive all academic plans for our students in the 2020-2021 school year.
- Successful plans require collaborative processes from the beginning stages of planning and development and require substantial and meaningful involvement of educators. Educators from all grade levels should be the majority of the members of any committee developing plans.

### **Students Need Equitable Access to Resources and Professional Educators:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the extreme disparities that exist in our communities based on race, class, gender, socio-economic status, and rural versus urban divide. The academic (including

learning abilities and modalities), social-emotional, physical, medical, and technological needs of our students must be addressed with equity at the center. Educators know we must work diligently to lift up all students. Equity and social justice plans need to be incorporated into everything we do.

Providing a one-size-fits-all plan will not ensure equitable access but will only serve to leave some students further behind. We call for plans to have multiple options that will allow academic and social-emotional growth for all students.

Not all students and educators are able to access the traditional school environment due to having compromised immune systems or are at higher risk of complications from COVID-19 due to pre-existing medical conditions. Students must be provided learning options, including online learning, that address this concern. Educators with at-risk medical conditions or with family members that are at-risk should be allowed to provide educational services that accommodate the needs of the educators consistent with agreements made between the local union and the district.

### **Continuum of Distance Learning Options & Blended Options Needed:**

As we start to re-open schools, and until a vaccine is developed for COVID-19, our students, educators, and their families will need a variety of educational options to maximize the educational advancement of all students in as safe an environment as possible.

These options must include a focus on providing students with equitable access to education, while also maintaining student privacy rights.

All options must be locally developed and could include:

- Limiting the number of students on campus based on social distancing requirements. Plans like this must address the following student, parent, and educator concerns:
  - How does the plan ensure health and safety of students and educators?
  - How does the plan provide equitable access to resources to meet the academic, socio-emotional, and physical needs of our students and educators?
  - How does the educational plan address age-specific concerns by grade levels?
  - How many days per week is a student on campus?
  - How many hours are students receiving instruction (on campus, virtual, distance learning, etc.) per day?
  - What options exist for students who cannot receive instruction at home?
  - What options exist for educators that have children or dependents receiving education from home?
  - How does this new plan allow for sufficient planning, preparation, and collaboration time for educators to maximize student learning?
  - How do we ensure that students who are not able to meet expectations due to hardships from the pandemic are not negatively impacted academically?
- Online instruction could be offered if the virtual classroom environment can protect students' and their educators' safety from inappropriate or harmful outside intruders from accessing the virtual classroom. This option must be implemented in an age-appropriate manner and allow for all students to equitably access this mode of education.

All proposals that impact the days, hours, safety, or other student learning conditions implemented by their educators will be contractually bargained to ensure that our students', educators', and their families' issues and concerns are addressed and agreed to before being implemented.

## Investing in Our Students

Students, parents, and educators know that now is the time to invest more resources in our students' education. Unfortunately, the economic crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic is causing our students to face drastic cuts to their academic and social-emotional supports right at the time when they deserve more investment, not less.

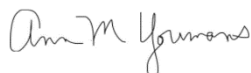
Educators call for immediate action at the local, state, and federal levels that secures our students' future by investing in our students' education and in our students' communities.

- Now more than ever our students need smaller class sizes to guarantee health, safety, and to maximize academic growth.
- Our students need a sufficient number of nurses, counselors, speech-language pathologists, librarians and psychologists to continue academic success and to provide equitable supports.
- School districts must do more to secure our students' future. If cuts are made by school districts, they must start farthest away from our students and their educators. Educators know that districts must streamline spending and ensure that all dollars spent are on programs and items that directly impact our students' abilities to thrive.
- Counties, cities, and local communities must come together to stop cuts and to increase funding for our students and the public services that lift up our communities. We call for the passage of the Schools & Communities First measure on the November 2020 ballot as one way to invest in public education and our communities in order to secure our students' future.
- We can only secure our students' future if we stop budget cuts from impacting them directly. California must ensure that all budget cuts remain far away from our students and their classrooms, be they virtual or physical.
- The federal government must provide vital resources to public schools so we can secure our students' future. We need our elected officials to act in support of our students.

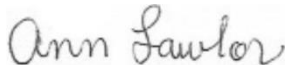
Public educators in Humboldt & Del Norte Counties stand together in our call for all students, parents, educators, administrators, and communities to unite because **All Students Need Safe & Healthy Schools**:



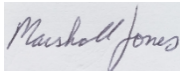
Liz Jacobson, Arcata Elementary TA



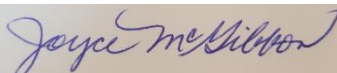
Ann Youmans, Arcata Elementary TA



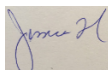
Ann Lawlor, Blue Lake TA



Marshall Jones, Del Norte TA



Joyce McGibbon, Eureka TA



Jessy Frisk, Ferndale Union TA



Casey Pape, Fortuna Elementary TA

Inma Thompson, Fortuna Union HSTA

Andrew Pierce, Freshwater TA

Melissa Seymour, Humboldt Bay TA

Rachael Riggs, Hydesville TA

Catherine Girard, Jacoby Creek TA

Maggie Lee Peters, Klamath Trinity TA

Heather Nyberg-Austrus, Loleta TA

Malia Freedlund, Mattole Valley TA

Angela Burkhardt, McKinleyville TA

Phyllis Nolan, McKinleyville TA

Wendy Zamboni, Northern Humboldt HSTA

April Hubner, Rio Dell TA

Kristina Darby, South Bay TA

Laura Lameris, Southern Humboldt TA

Stefanie Watson, TA of Pacific Union

Stephanie Strasser, Trinidad TA