

## Summary of Delegate Sessions on Reopening of Schools



This document contains a summary from the optional CSBA Delegate Meeting on May 22, 2020 via Zoom. CSBA Delegates discussed reopening of California schools for the 2020-21 school year.

During this meeting, Delegates participated in nine breakout sessions, discussing various topics and themes surrounding reopening: **Communications, Distance Learning, Equity Considerations, Funding, Health & Safety, Labor Relations, Learning Loss, Social & Emotional Needs, and Special Education.**

The master notes from these sessions are extensive and have proven incredibly valuable for CSBA staff as we continue to identify ways to support our members through this pandemic, leading up to reopening in the fall and beyond. Many of the thoughts, concerns and ideas from these sessions are reflected in CSBA's report on reopening, ***The Uncertain Road Ahead***, which was released last week.

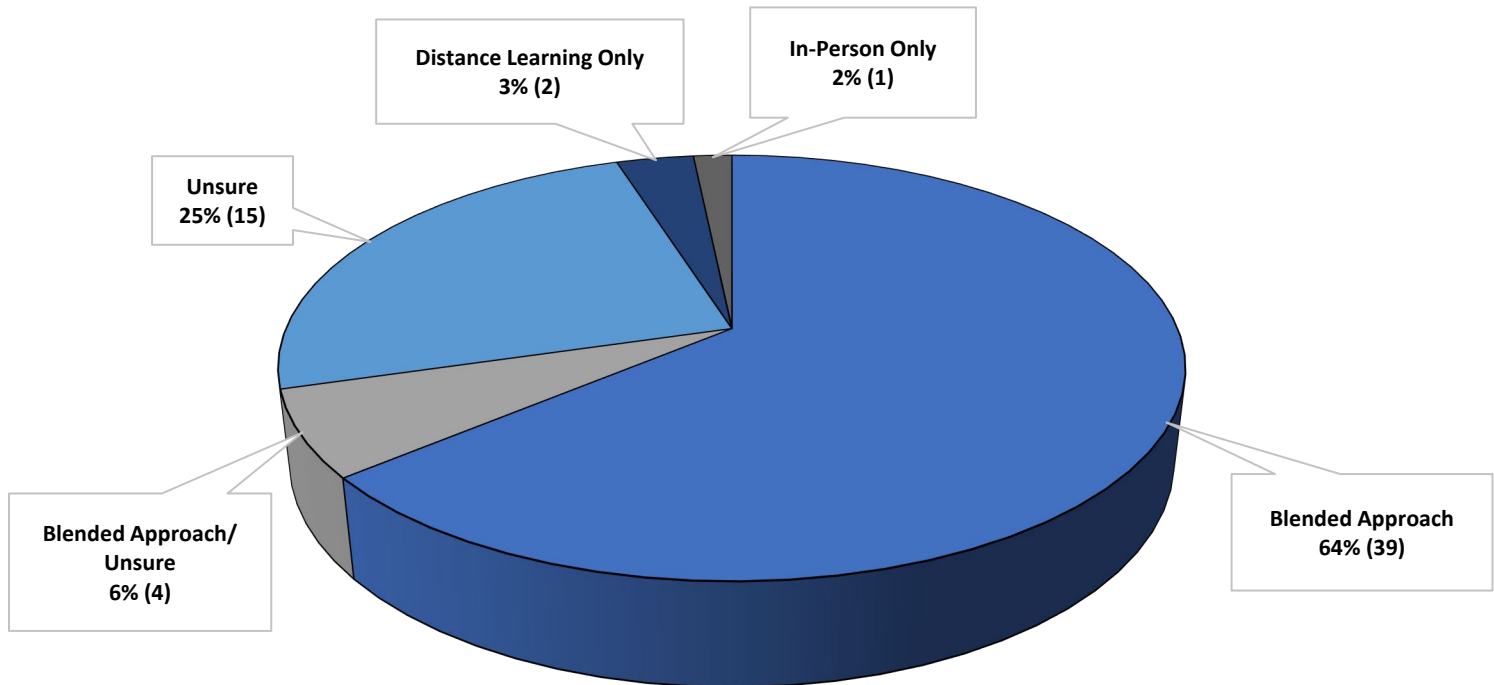
[Click here to view and download \*The Uncertain Road Ahead\*](#)

The accompanying CSBA Webinar, released this week, ***The Uncertain Road Ahead: Real World Applications of School Re-Opening Guidance*** can be viewed by following the link below.

[Click here to view](#)

CSBA staff continues to review all the information provided by our Delegates – both from the May 22 meeting and from all correspondence since the beginning of the pandemic – to guide the important work we have done, and the on-going work that still lies ahead as we move toward reopening. We greatly appreciate the information and feedback provided by Delegates and welcome your thoughts, perspectives, and ideas on an ongoing basis.

## “How do you plan to re-open schools in the fall?”



### Summary of key points from breakout sessions

#### Communication

- Communication with parents is critical. People want constant information around school closures; it is better to err on the side of overcommunicating than not enough communication.
- Districts have employed automated calls to all families, along with emails and texts; some have done live phone calls with the superintendent; some are using a tiered approach (cabinet -> staff -> parents and students so that all input is captured).
- Virtual events with school staff can boost morale locally.
- Even if you do not have something new to say all the time, it is about cementing relationships and affirming that you are concerned. That's why the Governor was having daily press conferences. That same dynamic holds true for districts.
- It is very important to keep an eye on what state and county officials are saying, because you need to be ready to respond quickly.

#### Distance Learning

- Equal access to broadband internet across the state is paramount.
- Minimum requirements for tablets/devices must be established.
- Basic state standards are going to be needed that allow for local flexibility based on individual district circumstances; curriculum must include a piece on how to train parents to use technology.

## Highlights from May 22 Delegate sessions on reopening

- New/amended language in teacher contracts/MOUs may be needed.
- Blended learning/hybrid of distance and in-person instruction is likely for many districts.
- Hands-on learning and visual and performing arts delivery will need more guidance.
- Younger students (K, 1, 2) will struggle significantly with the lack of in-person attention.
- Distance learning doesn't work for little kids, so we should admit that and figure out what this new type of education should really look like; distance learning also doesn't work for kids with special needs.
- A challenge for teachers is that they currently have a class of students that they have established relationships with, but in the fall many will have all new kids.
- CSBA policies and best practice models can help ensure statewide consistency and success; districts will also need legal protection/cap on legal fees (many threats of lawsuits particularly on special education issues).

### Equity Considerations

- Some have been hearing from parents with children in two or more schools regarding the need to coordinate schedules.
- Access to technology is a major challenge; kids need to share cell phones to get connected, only one device per family and no reliable Wi-Fi; some districts have gaps of 20% all the way to 50% of kids with no Wi-Fi or unreliable tech access.
- Many students are not doing work. If in the fall only a portion of students come back, whom should we target? Those that we haven't heard from? Is that fair to students that want to go to school?
- We need to figure out how to bring some kids back, or we're going to lose them. If you don't read in K-2, you're at a disadvantage online.
- Many concerns about parents who are afraid and don't want to send students to school.
- Charter schools are ready to grab students.
- In high cost of living areas, families are moving out; more housing and food insecurity.
- Fall will be challenging because students will have been out for 3 or 4 months. Did they understand and benefit from the curriculum they were working on? We can't assume they'll all be on same page.
- Why are some students not hearing from their teacher all week, but other teachers inundate students with work?
- Would be helpful to know the great opportunities that are going on around the state and share the mistakes; develop a clearing house of best practices.

### Funding

- Different districts are in different situations; districts need as much flexibility as possible as it comes to use of funds going forward; support needed from the state wherever possible on PPE (masks, sanitizer, etc.) to provide those services/materials with non-Prop 98 dollars.
- There is widespread uncertainty on how much money is coming and when its coming, makes planning difficult. Flexibility is crucial to purchase PPE, etc.
- Some looking to hire an outside firm to sanitize the rooms; have already been forced to lay off or reduce janitorial staff, can districts have the flexibility to meet those needs?

## Highlights from May 22 Delegate sessions on reopening

- Bussing is a tremendous challenge, distancing would require tripling bus routes, special education almost impossible.
- Can't expect middle class families to keep ponying up money, which they do, but it remains daunting.
- Flexibility also needed on instructional minutes and similar statutory requirements; potential flexibility in teacher credentialing.
- Purchase of PPE should be made by the state with non-Prop 98 money.
- Protection from lawsuits will be needed.
- Advocacy efforts are crucial for individual board members to convey their funding challenges directly to legislators.

### Health & Safety

- For Special Education students taking care of themselves, even wearing a mask would be extremely difficult.
- Concerns of potentially being sued over safety; districts need some protection from being sued in case the requirements cannot be met.
- Parents would prefer split days, but you would have to cut classes (PE, electives) to cram enough learning in; but if it is split, what are younger kids going to do – cannot stay home by themselves if their parents work.
- Schools will be responsible for keeping kids safe if they live in a highly impacted household.
- Districts need guidance on safety protocols as some county health departments are not providing such resources.

### Labor Relations

- Guidance from the state is needed.
- Good relationships are key, but without knowing what classes will look like, how long the day is, etc., it's more difficult.
- First question is on issue of reserves and how to deal with questions about reserves with labor. Second issue is hazard pay – we don't know what fall will look like. Third issue is state-level waivers.
- Everything is being considered a change in working conditions and bargainable; state guidance would be helpful, taking some of the negotiations out of district hands.
- More consideration/concern of laying off certified staff than in usual potential cuts because of new working conditions and potential need for classified staff.
- Challenge with some districts having hazard pay and other districts not doing so.
- Concern about having overabundance of employees without knowing how many students will arrive.
- Districts may need to rethink evaluations, how we staff, etc. Staffing needs may be different during this stretch (i.e. maybe more cleaning staff, fewer aides, etc.) - that will change negotiations.
- Questions about what we do with teachers/staff who are medically compromised.
- How can schools restructure so that online instruction can be done by those who are best at it and in person is done by those with strengths in person, etc.
- Have gone from discussing raises with labor to considering layoffs; district has a taskforce with parents, labor, district leadership to discuss reopening schools.

## **Learning Loss**

- Several districts utilizing iReady.
- There will be work that will not have been done, standards will not be met because teachers were not teaching them. Learning loss timelines will be different.
- Parents are trying to do all the work for the students. Parents having issues letting go and letting kids talk to their teachers. Some kids and teachers are MIA because they cannot do Zoom; talking about doing distance learning 100% next year.
- District considering bringing our at-risk kids back 3 weeks early for a summer camp; have been identified by teachers as turning in work that may not be up to the mark and then be reassessed after the summer camp.
- How do you go forward when you don't have a benchmark? A kid completed Spanish 2 with half the skills so do you put them in Spanish 3?
- Assessing students when they return to know what they know and do not know, will be key.
- District brought in portable hot spots; all students have chrome books, but students are not using them. The lower socioeconomic groups, even though we have paid for their internet, are not using it; a lot of parents have enrolled their kids in online schools and those kids are soaring.
- Teachers are just maintaining, not challenging students.
- Every school district should be sending communication to their communities letting them know they are being heard and these are some of the issues we are facing come opening in the fall; 85% say they want to come back.

## **Social & Emotional Needs**

- Stressors are increased not only from pandemic but families losing jobs.
- Some students are at more disadvantage with parents who can't support distance learning.
- Will likely be more homeless kids to service after pandemic.
- Local non-profits for mental health are overwhelmed; they were at capacity before.
- In smaller districts, staff wear multiple hats, so counselors do not have the resources/time to deal with the larger need.
- How do we know the level of trauma in the community when kids are not in school; teachers are mandatory reporters, but without that interaction how do kids get help?
- Uptick in family violence – schools need to have better communication with police. Need to figure out how to better determine levels of trauma for mandatory reporters.
- Text to Tip program; expand use of program at the local level – provides a more personal way for students to reach out, especially those in homes with violence – they don't have to talk on the phone.
- Need help in identifying programs out there that may partner with schools.
- Great concerns with teacher mental health – we talk about students but very little is said about teachers.
- District providing social media mentoring – how best to use/what to look for?
- We are losing kids because of the lack of face-to-face with teachers and others. Need additional training on how to connect better with students in times of distance learning.

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- Partnerships can be formed with Hospitals/HEI's/county programs to use interns completing their practicum in social services.

### **Special Education**

- State waivers may be needed for some small and rural districts.
- Flexibility needed on IEPs.
- Would like guidance from state re: special ed classes; knee jerk reaction is to just relocate students, but parents will be upset, and District may not be meeting needs; concerned about lawsuits resulting out of this.
- First 30 days when school opens mandate is problem. No one can do anything right now; do not have a lot of clarity from State or Federal government.
- Guidelines re: IDEA or common practices what we can and cannot do.
- Districts looking for protection from cap on litigation.