

CORRESPONDENCE

10/05/2020
Item 1

Reese, Latasha

Subject: FW: Schools opening and COVID

September 23, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department
c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re:
COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing to you all today in hopes that you will recognize the harm virtual schooling has on our children and urge you to open our schools. I am the parent of three elementary age children who have been participating in distant learning since March. Our school is doing the best that they can however children learn best when present in a classroom. At this point they have missed almost half a year of in person education!

To expect any child, let alone young children, to actually learn via distance learning day after day is unrealistic. The children inevitably lose focus, tune out and then miss the lesson. These children are not familiar with their teachers as having only met them via the computer and are embarrassed to ask questions or interrupt the teachers. It is hard for the teachers to recognize children who are not understanding the lesson. The children fall behind in their lesson and we won't notice until it's too late. Further, even in the best of circumstances, the internet is not perfect. We often lose signal in our house and by the time my children are able to reconnect the lesson is over. We are hindering our children and keeping them from learning.

Schools across California have opened safely. Schools which are miles from our Los Angeles County borders have opened to students, yet Los Angeles County ignores these examples and the guidelines set forth by the state for safe return to school via the waiver process. The CDC has even recommended students return school for in person learning since the benefits outweigh the risks, which for children are extremely low.

Pasadena has COVID cases that are low enough to safely reopen schools. Other cities are doing so safely and there is no reason, we should not be able to follow suit. Waiting for a cure or a vaccine is simply not an option when our children's mental health is at stake. Please review the waiver process and allow the schools to open on a case by case basis.

I want to know what it will take to get our children back in schools so they do not fall behind and suffer from irreparable emotional damage.

Regards,

Nicole Anido

Altadena, CA 91001

cc: Kathryn Barger

September 27, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department
c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing to you in support of all the families/parents at home who are struggling with their children learning online. This type of platform does not provide interactive in person socialization and learning that is essential for development and growth. We need for schools to open.

I have a nephew in preschool who needs to be in school and amongst peers for early childhood development. He needs to be independent from his parents in order to gain confidence and exercise his curiosity. I implore you to consider the severe mental and physical impacts this shutdown is having on our kids, adults, and families. We need to have our schools open and be giving more resources for our children to thrive.

LA County reported just last week a positivity rate of 2.8% and a case level of 7 per 100,000. The CDC has even recommended that children be back in the classroom. It is imperative you do everything in your capabilities to open our schools and parks for the sake of our community and its children. They are more important than ever. It's not too late to change the course and prevent lifelong damage if we act now.

Regards,

C. Gibson Banta

Pasadena, CA 91105

cc: Kathryn Barger

MARISSA BELL

September 22, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing to ask that you please reopen schools in Pasadena! My husband and I are both business owners and we understand the risks of reopening. However, if anything should take precedence, it should be the reopening of our schools.

With a 5-year old remote learning, I am lucky that I have a nanny to monitor him while I work full-time, and that my younger daughter can actually attend preschool! I honestly can't imagine how we would be surviving if we weren't in the position to have full-time help, which only **continues to advantage the advantaged**. There is no way that my husband and I would be able to support our child at school and continue to hold productive jobs without our full-time nanny.

Beyond that, my heart breaks for my child who has moved to a new school and "never met his friends." I don't believe we have any clue the long-lasting repercussions that this remote learning will continue to have on these very young, developing children. If Pasadena was fraught with Covid cases, I would be more understanding of our school closures, but we are NOT! And in fact, you know that the CDC has actually recommended that students be back in school when the benefits outweigh the risks, which for Pasadena children and teachers are extremely low. After years of focusing on proper development, limiting any screens in the house (no iPad!), working on manners and social behaviors, my son spends more than 3 hours a day on screens trying to create relationships ... normalizing relationships... that are strictly digital.

Throughout quarantine and this pandemic, my husband and I have been focused on the greater good. We wear masks, we distance, and we follow the recommendations of our leaders. However, I believe that we have come to the point where the greater good for Pasadena (our children, our parents, and our workers) is to put our children in schools.

Thank you for your regard and time, and please let me know what steps you will be taking!

Regards,

Marissa Bell

Marissa Bell
Pasadena, CA 91105

cc: Kathryn Barger

September 28, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing you today to implore you to please open our schools. I am a mother of 2 boys, my oldest being in second grade this year. We have been doing remote learning for 5 weeks and to say it's been a struggle for our whole family is an understatement. I am constantly running around trying to make sure our second grade is focused on the task at hand while trying to keep my other children occupied while he is at 'school'.

The internet doesn't always seem to work and the children are too young to work the technology on their own. Most importantly, I am concerned for my child's mental health. He does not have children his age to talk to and play with. Learn through play is such an important developmental need for these children and we are depriving them of this basic need.

Kids who are forced to be at home are suffering from isolation will cause anxiety in many social situations. My child has come to completely rely on me for all things, instead of learning independence that he would be taught in school.

The CDC has even recommended student be back in school for in person learning. Stating the benefits outweigh the risks, which for children are extremely low. We have a city full of smart, educated and willing people, can we not get creative and find a way to provide some stability for our children?

Furthermore, public parks or any other enrichment opportunities for children have been closed. No physical education opportunities, no children's museums, no recreational programs. Our children are left with their parents who are forced to provide and be everything to their children, parent, friend, and teacher.

Pasadena has COVID cases that are low enough to safely reopen schools. Other cities are doing so safely and there is no reason, we should not be able to follow suit. Waiting for a cure or a vaccine is simply not an option when our children's mental health is at stake.

I would like to hear next steps from you. I want to know what it will take to get our children back in schools so they do not fall behind and suffer from irreparable emotional damage.

Regards,

Julie Beswick

Glendale, CA 91208

cc: Kathryn Barger

September 30, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky

100 North Garfield Ave.

Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: Covid-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing you today to implore you to please open our schools. I am a mother of 2 children, a kindergartner and a 5th grader. We have been doing remote learning for six months with a break in the summer. To say it has been a struggle for my family is an understatement.

I am concerned for my kids mental health. My once fun loving 5 year son that loved school so much now hates getting on zooms and its make him beyond irritable and aggressive. Every morning the first thing he asks is if he has to zoom, he is beyond upset when I say yes.

The CDC has recommended students be back in school for in person learning. Stating our benefits outweigh the risks, which for children are extremely low.

Pasadena has COVID cases that are low enough to safely reopen schools. Other cities are doing so safely and there is no reason, we should not be able to follow suit.

Please stand and fight for our children. They need to be in person, we are falling behind and causing irreparable emotional damage.

Thank you,

Karina Bland

Cc: Kathryn Barger

ANDREW BOAZ

September 22, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing this letter an appeal to open up schools in Pasadena for in person learning. My wife, Hayley, and I have 2 young girls and a 3rd due in December. We were thrown into an unprecedented scenario last March when COVID first came on the scene. Like most people, we were scared and took it seriously given the minimal information available to us at the time. Nothing is more important than the health and safety of our family and community, and we strictly adhered to the Stay at Home order that was issued. At the time, this action seemed necessary to keep everyone safe.

Now we are at the point that 6 months has passed and I believe it is time to re-evaluate some of those steps taken. Particularly, opening up schools. Our children, ages 6 and 3, have been deprived from social interaction with teachers, classmates, and friends in the community. This takes a toll on them as these are important years of socialization and growth in independence. By all available statistics, the effect of COVID on these young children is essentially non-existent. Of course there are outliers as there are with any study. But studies have shown that young children have not been affected.

I urge you to come up with a solution that allows our children to return to school and also protects the teachers. I am not naïve to believe that children are the only focus in a school. There are faculty and staff that also become susceptible to contracting the virus. However, I am certain there is a solution that could allow for teachers to opt out of teaching without losing their jobs if they wish to do so.

My family is very fortunate and blessed in this current situation. My wife is able to help our kids with online school, and I am currently allowed to work from home by my employer. This is an ideal setup given the circumstances. However, there are many families that are in different situations. Single parents and parents that work outside of the home are forced to find someone else to watch their children during what would be normal school times. Daycare is an extra expense that many cannot afford, and did not need to account for with their family planning.

In conclusion, I believe it is in the city's best interest to reopen schools for in person learning. We have complied and done every step asked of us up to this point, and accomplished a flattening of the curve. It is time we stop living in fear and adapt to this new environment.

Best Regards

Andrew Boaz

Pasadena, CA 91105

Cc: Kathryn Barger

September 22, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing this letter an appeal to open up schools in Pasadena for in person learning. My husband, Andrew, and I have 2 young girls and a 3rd due in December. Our daughters are 5 and 3. We have continued to safely follow the CDC guidelines that have been issued.

As we enter our 7th month of staying at home, I believe we need to re-evaluate opening schools. Our children are being deprived of social, emotion and intellectual learning. They have not been able to go to museums, play on playgrounds or make new friends. My Bachelor Degrees focused on Psychology and Child Development, I am well aware that these are the most important years of growth. Healthy and necessary experiences are being taken away from my children. It is crucial to our society to socialize our children with others. I will no longer sit on the sidelines and support virtual learning.

By all available statistics, the effect of COVID on these young children is essentially non-existent. Of course there are outliers as there are with any study. But studies have shown that young children have not been affected. How is it healthier keeping our children at home in front of a screen for hours? I urge you to come up with a solution that allows our children to return to school and also protects the teachers. However, if some teachers are unhealthy or not comfortable, I am certain there are solutions that could allow teachers to opt out of teaching without losing their jobs.

My family is in a very fortunate situation as I am able to stay home with our children and help my daughter with online learning. Each day we begin, I think of other families where staying home is not an option. Doing both their jobs and attending to their children would not be possible. There are many wealthy families in Pasadena at the most prestigious private schools. In addition to their exceptional education, I know a number of families that have multiple nannies and/or extracurriculars set up for their children every day. The academic accessibility is going to crucially divide the lower and upper income families. Daycare, camps and lessons require an extra expense that many cannot afford.

What about children in emotionally or physically abusive homes? Children feel the anxiety and nonverbals from parents, even in the healthiest of homes. The emotional damage of being at home for 7 months in a stressful situation will be irreversible. Children are being deprived from the warmth of a loving teacher.

In conclusion, I believe it is in the city's best interest to reopen schools for in person learning. We have complied and done every step asked of us up to this point, and accomplished a flattening of the curve. It is time we stop living in fear and adapt to this new environment.

Best Regards,

Hayley Boaz

Pasadena, CA 91105

Cc: Kathryn Barger

September 27, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department
c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing to you in support of all the mothers at home who are struggling with the online learning for their kids and need schools to open sooner than later. I am a mom of two and I implore you to consider the severe mental and physical impacts this shutdown is having on our kids and young adults. Learn through play is such an important developmental need for these children and we are depriving. Kids who are forced to be at home are suffering from isolation will cause anxiety in many social situations. It is time to change course and take action to get these kids back to school. The time is now to reverse course and see that our kids are now suffering on a larger level compared to those with COVID. Six months of lockdowns have now created an irreversible loss for our children's education. It is imperative you do everything in your capabilities to open our schools and parks for the sake of our community and its littlest members.

Regards,

Caroline Botsford

Pasadena, CA
91105

cc: Kathryn Barger

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky

City Clerk

100 North Garfield Ave.

Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I writing to implore you to please open our schools. I have four children, 3 of which are in elementary school grades 1st - 5th. I see my children suffering everyday with frustration, loneliness, and inability to focus for long periods of time on zoom. I have been told as long as my children have been alive by pediatricians that prolonged screen time is bad for them. I can see this in their bloodshot eyes and headaches, and sore ears from wearing headphones. Not only do they suffer physically but mentally as well. They are sad and lonely. They miss their friends and are forgetting how to socialize with children their age.

It has also taken a toll on me as a mother. I have become frustrated as well with technology issues, not understanding how to submit things, etc. Our household is stressed and it is not good for anyone. The Covid numbers are incredibly low and yet the guidelines keep changing. Please, take politics out of it and care about the physical and mental health of our children.

At this point, we beg for schools to reopen.

Regards,

Harper Burge

NOELLE BURNETT

September 28, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing you today to urge you to open our schools. I am a mother of three children, my oldest being in second grade this year. We have been doing remote learning for 6 weeks and to say it's been a struggle for our whole family is an understatement. I am constantly running from one computer to the other to make sure my kids are staying on task and focused. In addition, they are too young to work the technology on their own.

Most importantly, I am concerned for my kids' mental health. Every morning they wake up in a bad mood and ask if they can skip school today. Every parent knows their kids, and for me, this is not normal. My kids are always happy. To know that your kids are struggling and sad every day is absolutely heart-breaking. Not only are they depressed, but I have had to take them on and off zoom periodically throughout the day because they are complaining of headaches, due to too much screen time. I am deeply concerned for the repercussions that this closure will cause. Not only are our kids suffering socially and mentally, but they are suffering academically as well. Let's face it, kids cannot grasp concepts nearly as well through a computer screen as they can in person, and likewise for teachers. They cannot explain/teach as well over zoom as they can in person.

The CDC has recommended students be back in school for in person learning. They have also reported that the survival rate for kids age 0-19 is 99.99%. There is absolutely no reason why LA County cannot open our schools, along with other neighboring cities/counties. With this kind of data, one can only ask if there are political reasons attached to this closure? At what point do our cities start giving true consideration to the burden already being placed on parents because the district/state/unions would rather be guided by politics rather than by reality, or God forbid, by the best interest of our kids. On top of all the other responsibilities parents have to assume, we now need to add teacher to the list. How sad that our kids have become the victims.

Waiting for a cure or a vaccine is simply not an option when our children's mental health is at stake, nor do we need to with the data produced by the CDC.

I would like to hear next steps from you. I want to know what it will take to get our children back in schools so they do not fall behind and suffer from irreparable emotional damage.

Regards,

Noelle Burnett

La Canada, CA 91011

cc: Kathryn Barger

September 24, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing to you in support of all the mothers at home who are struggling with the online learning for their kids and need schools to open sooner than later. I am not a mother yet; however I can see how this shutdown is affecting children not only in our community, but in our country. I would love for Pasadena to set an example and push for change back to our normal lives. We do not accept this new normal for these children! I implore you to consider the severe mental and physical impacts this shutdown is having on our kids and young adults. It is time to change course and it is time to take action to get these kids back to school. LA County reported yesterday a positivity rate of 2.8% and a case level of 7 per 100,000. The time is now to reverse course and see that our kids are now suffering on a larger level compared to those with COVID. Six months of lockdowns have now created an irreversible loss for our children's education. It is imperative you do everything in your capabilities to open our schools and parks for the sake of our community and its youngest members.

Regards,

Loryn Cervenka

Pasadena, CA 91106
cc: Kathryn Barger

MARY FORREST

September 22, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky

City Clerk

100 North Garfield Ave.

Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing you today to implore you to please open our schools. I am a mother of 3 boys, my oldest being in kindergarten this year. We have been doing remote learning for 5 weeks and to say it's been a struggle for our whole family is an understatement. I am constantly running around trying to make sure our kindergartner is focused on the task at hand while trying to keep my other children occupied while he is at 'school'.

The internet doesn't always seem to work and the children are too young to work the technology on their own. Most importantly, I am concerned for my child's mental health. He does not have children his age to talk to and play with. Learn through play is such an important developmental need for these children and we are depriving them of this basic need.

Kids who are forced to be at home are suffering from isolation will cause anxiety in many social situations. My child has come to completely rely on me for all things, instead of learning independence that he would be taught in school.

The CDC has even recommended student be back in school for in person learning. Stating the benefits outweigh the risks, which for children are extremely low. We have a city full of smart, educated and willing people, can we not get creative and find a way to provide some stability for our children?

Furthermore, public parks or any other enrichment opportunities for children have been closed. No physical education opportunities, no children's museums, no recreational programs. Our children are left with their parents who are forced to provide and be everything to their children, parent, friend, and teacher.

Pasadena has COVID cases that are low enough to safely reopen schools. Other cities are doing so safely and there is no reason, we should not be able to follow suit. Waiting for a cure or a vaccine is simply not an option when our children's mental health is at stake.

I would like to hear next steps from you. I want to know what it will take to get our children back in schools so they do not fall behind and suffer from irreparable emotional damage.

Regards,

Mary Forrest

Pasadena, CA 91105

cc: Kathryn Barger

September 23, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department
c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh,

I am writing you today to beg you to please open our schools. I am a father of 3 boys, my oldest being in kindergarten this year. We have been doing remote learning for 5 weeks and to say it's been a struggle for our whole family is an understatement. As the husband working for a company who is an essential business, I am watching my amazing wife lose her mind because of the lack of action by the City.

Relying on internet, websites functioning correctly, and our 5 year old not accidentally touching a button while trying to make sure our 3.5 year old and 10 month old don't hurt themselves is a task I wouldn't wish on our greatest enemy. Most importantly, I am concerned for my child's mental health. He does not have children his age to talk to and play with. Learn through play is such an important developmental need for these children and we are depriving them of this basic need. There will need to be billions of dollars invested into mental health check-ups and counseling sessions because of the lack of action by our State, County, and City. Kids who are forced to be at home are suffering from isolation will cause anxiety in many social situations. My child has come to be completely dependent on my wife and I on me for all things, instead of learning independence that he would be taught in school.

We have the amazing opportunity to be the example...we have our own Public Health Officer, teachers and education administrators who have put MONTHS into prepping for a return to in-person learning. Let's make it happen. This is killing our local economy, with drug and alcohol use on the exponential rise due to the mental effects of not being in school, work, and living a somewhat normal life.

Furthermore, public parks or any other enrichment opportunities for children have been closed. No physical education opportunities, no children's museums, no recreational programs. Our children are left with their parents who are forced to provide and be everything to their children...parent, friend, and teacher.

Pasadena has COVID cases that are low enough to safely reopen schools. Other cities are doing so safely and there is no reason we should not be able to follow suit. Waiting for a cure or a vaccine is simply not an option when our children's mental health is at stake.

I would like to hear next steps from you, and guidelines for a return to school. I know that our school is prepared and HAVE been prepared since the summer. I want to know what it will take to get our children back in schools so they do not fall behind and suffer from irreparable emotional damage. If we want to make sure people stop leaving California for states that take action like Texas, we need to make a difference in our children's education, and not let them fall victim because of our local and state government officials failure to act.

Regards,

Ryan Forrest

Pasadena, CA 91105

cc: Kathryn Barger

Jomsky, Mark

From: Ryan Forrest
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2020 7:48 AM
To: Goh, Ying-Ying
Cc: Jomsky, Mark; KBarger@bos.lacounty.gov; Mermell, Steve; Tornek, Terry; Madison, Steve; Gordo, Victor; Wilson, Andy; Masuda, Gene; Hampton, Tyron; Kennedy, John; McAustin, Margaret
Subject: Re: schools

CAUTION: This email was delivered from the Internet. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know the content is safe.

Good Morning Dr. Goh,

Thank you for your prompt response.

When does the health of our children take priority? There are no school counseling services that can be as effective as children being able to be with others and play. Isolation is so damaging to our children. We all must pay attention to the needs of our children. I, along with my wife, our friends, and community should not and will not stop being advocates for our children.

We have had 2,542 cases so far. Pasadena has a population of about 138,000. That means 1.8% of our population have had a case of COVID-19. Out of this number, a very large group is part of the skilled nursing facility cases. This should be taken into consideration? The people who were affected were in an extremely high risk environment!

In regards to day care and day camps, those require a lot of additional funding to which many families are not privileged to. If day camps and daycares are open, what is the difference to opening schools when as you get older washing hands, wearing masks, and social distancing rules are more enforceable. If COVID-19 is spreading like you say it is, there should be no reason these facilities should be open either. Keeping those open to people who can afford it is widening the socioeconomic class and will cause further and deep rooted emotional damage to children and adults alike.

The mental health of parents should also be considered. Whether you are working or at home full time, parents rely on a village to help raise a child. The gift of community has been completely stripped from parents. The stress a parent feels to be everything to a child can cause deep emotional stress and cause damage to the parent child relationship. If parents don't feel like they have resources, it can be extremely isolating for them as well.

In my opinion, we should be taking all the risks to ensure the safety of our children's futures in regards to mental health.

I'm hoping we can work together, along with our school administrators to fasttrack a re-entry into schools, and get the resources our students and parents need to prevent further physical and emotional stress.

I'd be interested to hear your thoughts at the next City Council meeting.

Thank you,

-Ryan

On Wed, Sep 23, 2020 at 10:38 PM Goh, Ying-Ying <ygoh@cityofpasadena.net> wrote:

Dear Mr. Forrest,

Thank you for sharing your personal experience with us. COVID-19 has taken a terrible toll on our schools' ability to engage and educate our children in traditional ways. It is a top priority to improve educational options for our students during this pandemic, and to help parents who rely on schools for childcare so they can go to work or attend to other family obligations.

Currently, the Pasadena Public Health Department is allowing in-person school activities in a gradual, stepwise fashion, to keep our community as safe as possible. We are actively working with schools to increase their capacity to implement public health protocols and to manage COVID-19 cases and outbreaks that will most certainly occur when they start in-person activities. We know that with current positivity rates of COVID-19, in any given week, there could be several infectious individuals on campus.

The first steps are:

- Helping schools prepare. All throughout the summer and on an ongoing basis, we have been providing technical assistance to schools to help them prepare for in-person activities in accordance with public health protocols, and helping them stay on top of the ever-evolving science as more information becomes available daily. For example, recently, more information and guidance has become available about reducing risk from possible opportunistic aerosol-transmission. Recommendations include updating HVAC systems and utilizing portable air filters, when school activities cannot be offered outdoors.
- Increasing state-permitted childcare capacity. Preschool/childcare activities are increasing because the CA Department of Social Services has expanded its definition of allowable childcare settings beyond licensed settings. DSS is granting waivers for non-licensed childcare settings to operate, including employer-offered childcare on school campuses. This will increase the number of people on school campuses, including those already there to support remote learning.
- Allowing limited in-person services for especially disadvantaged children. This week, we began accepting notifications from schools that will be offering in-person services on campus for children with IEPs for disabilities and other special needs such as ESL services.
- Allowing limited in-person services to address mental health needs and social services. We are working with schools to support essential services offered in accordance with public health protocols on school campuses, such as mental health clinical visits, other medical services like immunizations, and social services for homeless youth.

- Allowing some low risk in-person activities important for college admissions. Last week, schools were allowed to begin offering critical standardized testing in-person, such as for the SATs or ACTs, subject to state and local cohorting guidance and public health protocols.

Once this significant increase in activities has been implemented, and we have had time detect whether cases increase as a result, we will consider working with elementary schools to begin some additional modified in-person activities. It takes several weeks to see the effects of activities or sector openings on COVID-19 case rates, once operations have been implemented.

Unfortunately, we have been seeing an increase in COVID-19 community case rates this past week, and we are monitoring for a surge in cases from Labor Day weekend. Also, as we enter flu season, we must monitor any impact flu cases may have on hospital capacity and our healthcare system's ability to maintain life-saving resources, before we can consider further opening or in-person activities.

The number one thing we can all do to support school reopening is to reduce community transmission rates. That means not gathering with people we don't live with, wearing face coverings for people ages 3 and up, and washing hands. New York City is gradually opening schools now, in the setting of over one month of positivity rates below 1%. Other countries have waited until they have had no new cases for a significant period of time. In those settings of community transmission lower than in LA County and Pasadena, the likelihood of schools to be able to stay open for in-person activities is much higher, because the likelihood of students and staff coming to school while infectious with COVID-19 is drastically reduced. We certainly strive to see community transmission rates low enough to ensure schools can reopen and stay open.

Sincerely,

Ying-Ying Goh MD, MSHS | she/her/hers

Director and Health Officer

Pasadena Public Health Department

1845 N Fair Oaks Avenue · Pasadena, CA 91103

P: (626) 744-6046

Email: ygoh@cityofpasadena.net

ERIKA FOY

PROTECTING PASADENA

September 23, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing to you in support of all the mothers at home who are struggling with the online learning for their kids and need schools to open sooner than later. I implore you to consider the severe mental and physical impacts this shutdown is having on our kids and young adults. It is time to change course and take action to get these kids back to school. LA County reported yesterday a positivity rate of 2.8% and a case level of 7 per 100,000. The time is now to reverse course and see that our kids are now suffering on a larger level compared to those with COVID. Six months of lockdowns have now created an irreversible loss for our children's education. It is imperative you do everything in your capabilities to open our schools and parks for the sake of our community and its littlest members. Please refer to my opinion piece on this issue published recently by [Pasadena Now](#).

Regards,

Erika Foy

Pasadena, CA 91106

cc: Kathryn Barger

ANNEKE GRECO

September 27, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing to you in support of all the mothers and fathers at home who are struggling with the online learning for their kids and need schools to open sooner than later. I implore you to consider the severe mental and physical impacts this shutdown is having on our kids and young adults. It is time to change course and take action to get these kids back to school. My husband and I both work fulltime and struggle to manage our "day jobs" along with home schooling our children and making sure they are on track with assignments. We've also noticed a significant change in their mental health, physical health and attitudes. Their screens have become their lives and it is causing damage to their social and communication skills; not to mention a lack of physical health and wellbeing.

LA County reported yesterday a positivity rate of 2.8% and a case level of 7 per 100,000. The time is now to reverse course and see that our kids are now suffering on a larger level compared to those with COVID. Six months of lockdowns have now created an irreversible loss for our children's education. It is imperative you do everything in your capabilities to open our schools and parks for the sake of our community and its future leaders.

Regards,

Anneke Greco

Pasadena, CA 91103

cc: Kathryn Barger

NEHA JESPERSEN

September 22, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

IT IS TIME TO OPEN OUR SCHOOLS! I am a mother of 3 children, my oldest is in the 4th grade, my middle daughter is in the 3rd grade and my youngest has just started kindergarten. We have been doing remote learning since March and to say it's been a struggle for our whole family is an understatement. My husband and I are both self employed. Not only have we been forced to stay at home and help our children with their daily remote schooling, we are also trying to keep a roof over our heads.

For the last 6 months, our children have been forced to study in isolation. All sports and activities have been taken away from them and they are struggling and falling behind in school. I am concerned for my children's mental health. Learning through play is such an important developmental need for these children and we are depriving them of this basic need.

Kids who are forced to be at home are suffering from isolation will cause anxiety in many social situations. My children have come to completely rely on me for all things, instead of learning independence that they would be taught in school.

The CDC has even recommended students be back in school for in person learning. Stating the benefits outweigh the risks, which for children are extremely low. We have a city full of smart, educated and willing people, can we not get creative and find a way to provide some stability for our children?

Furthermore, public parks or any other enrichment opportunities for children have been closed. No physical education opportunities, no children's museums, no recreational programs. Our children are left with their parents who are forced to provide and be everything to their children, parent, friend, and teacher.

Pasadena has COVID cases that are low enough to safely reopen schools. Other cities are doing so safely and there is no reason, we should not be able to follow suit. Waiting for a cure or a vaccine is simply not an option when our children's mental health is at stake.

I would like to hear next steps from you. I want to know what it will take to get our children back in schools so they do not fall behind and suffer from irreparable emotional damage.

Regards,

Neha Jespersen

Pasadena, CA 91103

cc: Kathryn Barger

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing you today to implore you to please open our schools. I am a mother of 1 boy and 1 girl, my oldest being in second grade this year. We have been doing remote learning since March and to say it's been a struggle is an understatement. I am constantly running around trying to make sure my son is in class and focused all the while my preschool has everything that she needs. I am no longer mom. I am teacher and my relationship with my children has suffered immensely.

Besides the fact that I have become the "bad guy" in my house because I am the one "making" my son do writing assignments he would rather not do am concerned also for my son's mental health. He does not have children his age to talk to and play with. Learn through play is such an important developmental need for these children and we are depriving them of this basic need. He is a very social child and misses his friends. All he knows is that one day went to school, and he never went back. It has caused extreme confusion and upset for him.

Kids who are forced to be at home are suffering from isolation will cause anxiety in many social situations. My child has come to completely rely on me for all things, instead of learning independence that he would be taught in school.

The CDC has even recommended student be back in school for in person learning. Stating the benefits outweigh the risks, which for children are extremely low. We have a city full of smart, educated and willing people, can we not get creative and find a way to provide some stability for our children?

Furthermore, public parks or any other enrichment opportunities for children have been closed. No physical education opportunities, no children's museums, no recreational programs. Our children are left with their parents who are forced to provide and be everything to their children, parent, friend, and teacher.

Pasadena has COVID cases that are low enough to safely reopen schools. Other cities are doing so safely and there is no reason, we should not be able to follow suit. Waiting for a cure or a vaccine is simply not an option when our children's mental health is at stake.

I would like to hear next steps from you. I want to know what it will take to get our children back in schools so they do not fall behind and suffer from irreparable emotional damage.

Regards,

Kate Kohorst

Pasadena, Ca 91105

cc: Kathryn Barger

September 28, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing to you today as a struggling single mom in the hope that my daughter's school can be reopened sooner than later. I have a 7 year old girl, Vienna, who has become a proud second grader this August. As much as I want to be more involved in her online studies, it is quite impossible for me to as I myself am going to graduate school.

Vienna is a a happy kid and very socialized, normally, before this pandemic. Now having stayed home for over 6 months, she has developed some issues due to lack of social interactions with peers. The studies have been virtual and so not real to kids at her age. Comparing to going into an actual classroom sharing all the learning experience with people, she is not getting the education suitable for her age.

As a single mom, this whole home school thing is too difficult. I have been through so much stress coping with all the mental issues she has been having since the lockdown. This prolonged isolation from social life has made us distressed and easily upset. 7 is such a vital age for kids to develop certain social skills and psychological mindset and my daughter is staying home all day with only me and our cat. I am deeply concerned that she is not getting the level of education and life she deserves!

As of today, LA county has been seeing a decrease in confirmed cases and Pasadena, sees a single digit confirmed cases on Sunday. With proper prevention methods reinforced in schools, I believe the kids will be safely placed in their classrooms. As a matter of fact, some of the pre-kindergartens that have been opened for over a month are doing very well. In my case, my daughter is so well taught by her teachers that she should wear masks and wash hands all the time. The kids are ready.

This COVID pandemic has cost our city too much already. Let's not make the kid's life another collateral damage. As the state has seen cities reopened safely, I believe a city like Pasadena is capable of doing it right. All the families and school staff are going to work together because all we want is for the kids to have the life they should be having.

I would like to hear from you about what is going to happen next. I always picture myself taking Vienna to museums, outdoor activities, with our KN95 masks on. Life has been put on hold for too long. I would love to have things going back to normal.

Best regards,
Veronica Luan

Pasadena CA 91105
cc: Kathryn Barger

Brad Lyddon

September 28, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department
c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing you today to request you to please open our schools. I am a father of twin boys in preschool and an uncle to my niece and nephew who started kindergarten this September at schools in Pasadena. They have been doing remote learning for 5 weeks and it has taken a toll on the whole family's mental health. I see my niece and nephew struggling with learning virtually and their parents struggling to balance the role of parent and teacher, as well as their younger children who also need their undivided attention for their safety and well being.

Kindergarten is such a fundamental stage for children to learn, and much of the learning is done amongst peers and play based. They are missing out on crucial aspects of learning and compromising their mental health by being forced to learn on screens isolated from friends. I can see social anxiety and complete dependence on parents evolving from the children who are not learning in person. I also see the parents, mostly mothers, sacrificing their careers to stay home and supervise their children as well as neglecting younger children's needs to insure child participation on zoom. This is creating devastating impacts on the entire family unit.

The CDC has recommended students be back in school for in person learning. The benefits outweigh the risks, which for children are extremely low. Pasadena has the resources, intelligence, and creativity to provide in person schooling. Furthermore, I implore you to open up parks or other enrichment activities for our children to have opportunities to play, participate in physical activity, and boost mental health.

Pasadena has COVID cases that are low enough to safely reopen schools. Other cities are doing so safely and there is no reason, we should not be able to follow suit. Waiting for a cure or a vaccine is simply not an option when our children's mental health is at stake.

I would like to hear next steps from you. I want to know what it will take to get our children back in schools so they do not fall behind and suffer from irreparable emotional damage.

Regards,

Brad Lyddon

La Canada Flintridge, CA 91011

cc: Kathryn Barger

Celene Lyddon

September 22, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing you today to request you to please open our schools. I am a mother of twin boys in preschool and an aunt to my niece and nephew who started kindergarten this September at schools in Pasadena. They have been doing remote learning for 5 weeks and it has taken a toll on the whole family's mental health. I see my niece and nephew struggling with learning virtually and their parents struggling to balance the role of parent and teacher, as well as their younger children who also need their undivided attention for their safety and well being.

Kindergarten is such a fundamental stage for children to learn, and much of the learning is done amongst peers and play based. They are missing out on crucial aspects of learning and compromising their mental health by being forced to learn on screens isolated from friends. I can see social anxiety and complete dependence on parents evolving from the children who are not learning in person. I also see the parents, mostly mothers, sacrificing their careers to stay home and supervise their children as well as neglecting younger children's needs to insure child participation on zoom. This is creating devastating impacts on the entire family unit.

The CDC has recommended students be back in school for in person learning. The benefits outweigh the risks, which for children are extremely low. Pasadena has the resources, intelligence, and creativity to provide in person schooling. Furthermore, I implore you to open up parks or other enrichment activities for our children to have opportunities to play, participate in physical activity, and boost mental health.

Pasadena has COVID cases that are low enough to safely reopen schools. Other cities are doing so safely and there is no reason, we should not be able to follow suit. Waiting for a cure or a vaccine is simply not an option when our children's mental health is at stake.

I would like to hear next steps from you. I want to know what it will take to get our children back in schools so they do not fall behind and suffer from irreparable emotional damage.

Regards,

Celene Lyddon

La Canada Flintridge, CA 91011

cc: Kathryn Barger

Jomsky, Mark

From: Celene Lyddon
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2020 2:03 PM
To: Goh, Ying-Ying
Cc: Jomsky, Mark; KBarger@bos.lacounty.gov; Mermell, Steve; Tornek, Terry; Madison, Steve; Gordo, Victor; Wilson, Andy; Masuda, Gene; Hampton, Tyron; Kennedy, John; McAustin, Margaret
Subject: Re: schools

CAUTION: This email was delivered from the internet. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know the content is safe.

Dr. Goh,

Thank you for your response.

I do not feel your response has the health of our children as a priority. Isolation from peers and straining parent child relationships is incredibly toxic to our children's health. You will have it on your sleeve when depression, anxiety, and worst of all, potential suicide rates rise amongst our children. Not to mention children who may live in unstable homes who are at the very most risk and don't have an adult such as a teacher or staff member at a school to confide in their problems.

As far as your claim to rates rising, what can you tell me about the information in this article?
<https://www.dailynews.com/los-angeles-county-closer-to-red-tier-as-case-rates-decline>

We have had 2,542 cases so far. We have a population of about 138,000. That means 1.8 of our population have had a case of COVID. Out of this number a very large group is skilled nursing facility cases. The people who were affected were in an extremely high risk demographic.

With day care and day camps being open, how is this any different then schools safety wise? Day care and day camps are not a viable option for most in the community and this is extra funding. All this is doing is widening the socioeconomic class and will cause further and deep rooted emotional damage to children and adults alike.

I worry about mental health of parents as well, which has not been taken into consideration at all. As mentioned in my letter, parents are having to sacrifice careers to stay home and supervise children's virtual learning. This has caused pay cuts in home further creating strain on the families. Aside from financial concerns, parents are being stretched too thin taking on the role of their child's teacher, friend, parents and some managing multiple children in their home.

If the CDC says schools should reopen using a risk continuum when will you value the physical and mental health of our children? We should be taking all the risks to ensure the safety and well being of our children's futures in regards to mental health. I will not stand to watch children fall behind...I hope you won't either. You do not want to carry the responsibility of what is happening to our children's mental health and the serious repercussions staying home is causing.

Please reconsider getting our children back in school ASAP.

Best,

Celene Lyddon

On Wed, Sep 23, 2020 at 10:42 PM Goh, Ying-Ying <ygoh@cityofpasadena.net> wrote:

Dear Ms. Lyddon,

Thank you for sharing your personal experience with us. COVID-19 has taken a terrible toll on our schools' ability to engage and educate our children in traditional ways. It is a top priority to improve educational options for our students during this pandemic, and to help parents who rely on schools for childcare so they can go to work or attend to other family obligations.

Currently, the Pasadena Public Health Department is allowing in-person school activities in a gradual, stepwise fashion, to keep our community as safe as possible. We are actively working with schools to increase their capacity to implement public health protocols and to manage COVID-19 cases and outbreaks that will most certainly occur when they start in-person activities. We know that with current positivity rates of COVID-19, in any given week, there could be several infectious individuals on campus.

The first steps are:

- Helping schools prepare. All throughout the summer and on an ongoing basis, we have been providing technical assistance to schools to help them prepare for in-person activities in accordance with public health protocols, and helping them stay on top of the ever-evolving science as more information becomes available daily. For example, recently, more information and guidance has become available about reducing risk from possible opportunistic aerosol-transmission. Recommendations include updating HVAC systems and utilizing portable air filters, when school activities cannot be offered outdoors.
- Increasing state-permitted childcare capacity. Preschool/childcare activities are increasing because the CA Department of Social Services has expanded its definition of allowable childcare settings beyond licensed settings. DSS is granting waivers for non-licensed childcare settings to operate, including employer-offered childcare on school campuses. This will increase the number of people on school campuses, including those already there to support remote learning.
- Allowing limited in-person services for especially disadvantaged children. This week, we began accepting notifications from schools that will be offering in-person services on campus for children with IEPs for disabilities and other special needs such as ESL services.
- Allowing limited in-person services to address mental health needs and social services. We are working with schools to support essential services offered in accordance with public health protocols on school campuses, such as mental health clinical visits, other medical services like immunizations, and social services for homeless youth.
- Allowing some low risk in-person activities important for college admissions. Last week, schools were allowed to begin offering critical standardized testing in-person, such as for the SATs or ACTs, subject to state and local cohorting guidance and public health protocols.

Once this significant increase in activities has been implemented, and we have had time to detect whether cases increase as a result, we will consider working with elementary schools to begin some additional modified in-person activities. It takes several weeks to see the effects of activities or sector openings on COVID-19 case rates, once operations have been implemented.

Unfortunately, we have been seeing an increase in COVID-19 community case rates this past week, and we are monitoring for a surge in cases from Labor Day weekend. Also, as we enter flu season, we must monitor any impact flu cases may have on hospital capacity and our healthcare system's ability to maintain life-saving resources, before we can consider further opening or in-person activities.

It is important to note that the CDC does not say it is safe to open schools. Rather, it provides guiding principles and broad recommendations for schools as they prepare to provide in-person activities, based on a risk continuum. The latest scientific evidence shows that children have the lowest mortality rate from COVID-19 compared to other age groups. However, they can be infected at a similar rate as older people, and have a high asymptomatic infection rate that makes it more challenging to prevent transmission. They appear to transmit SARS-CoV2 virus to their peers and to adults at a similar rate as adults do, if not at a greater rate, and can do so even when they are asymptomatic. We are also tracking on multi-system inflammatory syndrome, a severe condition in children associated with COVID-19 that has been reported around the country and in LA County.

Children and families do have some options for activities. Youth sports activities in accordance with public health protocols, including for young children, and outdoor museums and gardens in LA County are allowed to be open. Recreational programs that are outdoors and in compliance with public health protocols are able to be open. Childcare centers and recreational day camps are also options.

The number one thing we can all do to support school reopening is to reduce community transmission rates. That means not gathering with people we don't live with, wearing face coverings for people ages 2 and up, and washing hands. New York City is gradually opening schools now, in the setting of over one month of positivity rates below 1%. Other countries have waited until they have had no new cases for a significant period of time. In those settings of community transmission lower than in LA County and Pasadena, the likelihood of schools to be able to stay open for in-person activities is much higher, because the likelihood of students and staff coming to school while infectious with COVID-19 is drastically reduced. We certainly strive to see community transmission rates low enough to ensure schools can reopen and stay open.

Sincerely,

Ying-Ying Goh MD, MSHS | she/her/hers

Director and Health Officer

September 23, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

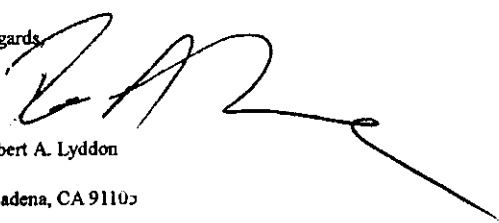
Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing to you in support of all the parent at home who are struggling with the online learning for their kids and need schools to open sooner than later.

I have two grandchildren in Kindergarten that need to be in school. I implore you to consider the severe mental and physical impacts this shutdown is having on our kids, adults, and families. We need to have our schools open and be giving more resources for our children to thrive.

LA County reported yesterday a positivity rate of 2.8% and a case level of 7 per 100,000. The CDC has even recommended that children be back in the classroom. The last six months of lockdowns have now created an for our children's education. It is imperative you do everything in your capabilities to open our schools and parks for the sake of our community and its children. They are more important than ever. It's not too late to change the course and prevent lifelong damage if we act now.

Regards,


Robert A. Lyddon

Pasadena, CA 91105

cc: Kathryn Barger

September 23, 2020

Mayor Tornek, City Council, Pasadena Health Department

c/o Mark Jomsky
City Clerk
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: COVID-19 and Pasadena School Reopening

Dear Mayor, City Council, and Dr. Goh

I am writing to you in support of all the parent at home who are struggling with the online learning for their kids and need schools to open sooner than later.

I have two grandchildren in Kindergarten that need to be in school. I implore you to consider the severe mental and physical impacts this shutdown is having on our kids, adults, and families. We need to have our schools open and be giving more resources for our children to thrive.

LA County reported yesterday a positivity rate of 2.8% and a case level of 7 per 100,000. The CDC has even recommended that children be back in the classroom. The last six months of lockdowns have now created an for our children's education. It is imperative you do everything in your capabilities to open our schools and parks for the sake of our community and its children. They are more important than ever. It's not too late to change the course and prevent lifelong damage if we act now.

Regards,

Susan Lyddon

Pasadena, CA 91105

cc: Kathryn Barger