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# **Aspiranet**

## **~ April 2021 ~**

### **Monthly Training**

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#### **Returning to the Classroom**

Senate Bill 86 (SB 86) was approved by the Legislature and signed into law in March 2021. While the law does not mandate reopening schools, it does state that “it is the intent of the Legislature that local educational agencies offer in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible during the 2020-21 school year.”

Following passage of SB 86, the California Dept. of Public Health (CDPH) issued guidance consistent with the most recent update from the CDC. This latest guidance permits all schools to re-open for in-person instruction even if their counties are in the purple tier as long as the average daily rate of new COVID-19 cases is less than 25 per 100,00 residents.

In all color tiers, schools that have not yet opened must post their COVID Safety Plan online five days before reopening. In the purple tier, all schools must also submit their COVID Safety Plan to their local health officer and the State Safe Schools team along with the online posting.

Additional guidance from the CDPH includes recommendations for distancing of at least three feet for students in classrooms. This is based on world-wide research that children get COVID-19 less often than adults, and when they do get sick, they get less sick than adults. Also, studies of open schools in the U.S. and around the world show that children do not seem to be a major source of transmission to each other or adults.

#### **Do children have to attend schools that reopen?**

No. Schools still have to offer distance learning for students whose parents don't want their children to receive in-person instruction.

#### **What does SB 86 essentially say?**

It provides schools with financial incentives totaling \$2 billion to offer in-person instruction beginning on April 1 to students with extra needs or requiring special attention and, for students in some grades, depending on what tier their counties are in on the state's color-coded system ranking the level of COVID-19 infection in local areas.

#### **What do school districts have to do to qualify for the funds?**

To get their share of the \$2 billion in incentive funding, school districts have to offer in-person instruction for students in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades beginning April 1.

They must also offer in-person instruction for “individuals with exceptional needs” and “to all prioritized pupil groups” by April 1.

As soon as the counties in which they're located move to the red, orange or yellow tiers, districts must offer in-person instruction to all elementary students, as well as to at least a single grade spanning middle and high schools. Districts will have advance notice, since it takes two weeks to confirm a change in tiers.

### **What students are in a “prioritized student group”?**

As noted above to receive the incentive funds, districts are also required to offer in-person instruction “to all pupils who are individuals with exceptional needs, if consistent with each pupil’s individualized education program, and to all prioritized pupil groups.”

The definition of which students would be in “a prioritized pupil group” is very broad, and includes special education students and foster youth.

### **Supporting your Child’s Return to the Classroom**

#### **Make yourself available as much as possible**

Create space for talking in different ways, such as going on a walk together or baking together – there may be less pressure in these circumstances than when sitting face-to-face. Check in with them periodically. Don’t assume they’re ok because they seem it. Ask how they feel about returning to school. If they have returned, ask how things are going. Inquire about classwork as well as social aspects of school. Ask questions like: what do you enjoy about being back? Any worries or challenges? Let them know you’re available and interested in their experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

#### **Sleep routine**

The importance of sleep cannot be underestimated for your children’s overall mental health, development and well being. As much as possible, maintain an evening routine that helps your child to transition to a scheduled bed time. This is important not only for young children but also for teens. Consider a warm bath or shower, quiet time reading a book, listening to soothing music, or cuddling with a favorite blanket or stuffed animal. It’s important to be consistent using this routine to help learn to children transition their mind and body for rest.

#### **Coping Skills**

If your child or youth is feeling anxious, acknowledge that it’s normal to feel anxious about going back to school – try sharing an example of a time you’ve felt anxious and what you did that helped. Maybe it was talking with someone you trust, using breathing techniques or getting outside for a walk. Explore with and encourage your child or youth to identify some ways that work best for them to feel better and help them to practice and/or provide gentle reminders when you sense they are feeling stressed or anxious.

#### **Sources/Additional Information:**

<https://edsources.org/2021/quick-guide-how-does-gov-newsoms-safe-schools-for-all-plan-work/646111>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/returning-school-after-lockdown/tips-parents-carers-return-to-school>

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov>

My signature below indicates that I have completed the April 2021 training "Returning to the Classroom" training.

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*Signature Foster Parent #1*

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*Date*

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*Print Name Foster Parent #1*

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*Signature Foster Parent #2*

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*Date*

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*Print Name Foster Parent #2*

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*Aspiranet Authorized Signature*

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*Date*

Training credit: \_\_\_\_ minutes