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Newsom's Reopening Schools Proposal—More Details Emerge

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On December 30, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom announced a proposal to encourage local educational agencies (LEAs) to resume in-person instruction as early as mid-February by providing incentive grants with a base rate of \$450 per average daily attendance (ADA) to pay for costs associated with classroom-based learning, such as cleaning, disinfecting, salaries and compensation, and COVID-19 testing for students and staff (see "[Newsom Proposes Incentive Grants to Reopen Schools](#)" in the December 2020 *Fiscal Report*). Since the unveiling of the Governor's plan, new details have emerged regarding the conditions that must be met for LEAs to access the grants, which are summarized below.

The Safe Schools for All Plan would open up rounds of grant funding beginning in February 2021. To qualify for the first round of funding, LEAs must meet the following requirements:

- Submit to their county office of education (COE) a COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP) that complies with new school reopening guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and emergency regulations for all employers issued by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (CalOSHA) no later than February 1, 2021. Governor Newsom indicated that new CDPH guidance for schools would be released on Friday, January 8, 2021, which will include testing cadences for students and staff to which grantees must adhere. LEAs also must post the CSP on their website homepages.
- Submit to their COE a ratified collective bargaining agreement or memorandum of understanding, if applicable, that implements the LEA's CSP no later than February 1, 2021. Districts in single-district counties are required to submit their documents to the California Department of Education.
- By February 16, 2021, offer in-person instruction to students in grades TK–2 and specialized cohorts across all grade spans, including students with disabilities, foster and homeless youth, and students who are unable to participate in distance learning, with a plan to adhere to asymptomatic testing requirements of students and staff consistent with the guidance from the state. LEAs that have already reopened for in-person instruction and meet these requirements will be able to access the incentive

grants.

- By March 15, 2021, expand in-person instructional offering to all TK–6 grade students served, if sixth grade is offered at the elementary school site.
- Continue to provide in-person instruction to all specified students through the 2020–21 school year unless otherwise required by state or local health orders or guidance.
- Certify to their COE that students who remain in distance learning have the necessary tools (computing devices and high-speed internet access) to participate in online education.

LEAs that are unable to meet the condition for funding under the initial round will have the opportunity to apply for lower grant amounts on a monthly basis. In order to be eligible to apply, they must meet the aforementioned requirements by the first day of the subsequent months (e.g., March 1, 2021) with in-person instruction for all TK–2 grade students and specialized cohorts on the first day of month and then to students through grade 6, if applicable, within the subsequent month.

LEAs that are unable to reopen for in-person instruction by February 16, 2020, due to local health conditions—specifically residing in areas where the average seven-day COVID-19 case rate exceeds 28 per 100,000 per day—are still eligible to apply for and receive funding from the initial round with base rates of \$450 per ADA. However, they must subsequently offer in-person instruction and meet all other requirements the month immediately following the case-rate level dropping below 28 per 100,000.

Finally, Governor Newsom's Administration has confirmed that the reopening incentive grants will be allocated based on an LEA's total ADA minus students enrolled in independent study. The requirement to offer in-person instruction covers all grade spans since cohorts of vulnerable students beyond sixth grade are included in the requirement. Therefore, all LEAs are eligible to apply, including high school districts.

We will provide updates on the anticipated new school reopening guidance and the reopening incentive grants once it becomes available.