



Dear Small School District Leaders,

Little over a week ago we were hosting our 2020 Annual Conference and were able to showcase our students, Superintendent of the Year, SSDA schools and Associate members. We also treasured our time together and enjoyed networking. All has changed as you know with the spread of COVID-19 across California and the U.S.

Here are some updates:

- A large number of school districts have closed, including San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego.
- President Trump declared a national state of emergency that will effectively unleash the full power of the federal government.
- SSDA and Capitol Advisors has been in constant communication with local school districts, California Department of Education and the Governor's Office over the past week. We have been your voice on issues that you have brought to our attention and ensure that you have the time and resources to provide students with safe and healthy schools.
- We are continuing to update our [Coronavirus Resources Article](#) in the newsroom of SSDA.org as new information becomes available.

Here are a few of the issues we have focused on:

- As with other school district emergencies hold ADA and attendance harmless.
- Support and a road map on Independent Study and on-line distance learning models
- Relief from mandated accountability and assessment requirements to mitigate work loads while trying to keep educate children during a pandemic
- Food service provisions for children
- Funding that will be needed to deal with school closure, pandemic cleaning procedures and student mental health and trauma needs.
- Brown Act protections/allowances.

Lastly, I personally wanted to give you 5 tips after working with leaders through fire, earthquakes, mudslides and the Oroville Dam evacuations:

1. As the leader of your organization, **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF**. You will be under tremendous pressure and everyone will be looking for your leadership and support. Immediately make sure you have a peer mentor to check in with for a pulse check.
2. Practice this sentence: ***This is a national and state pandemic emergency at a magnitude we have not seen in our lifetime.*** When some parent, media, community member or staff questions your decisions about closing or suspending, remind them this is a pandemic.
3. **Normalcy**. During school closures and/or distance learning, millions of children will miss school, their teacher and friends. Try to set up some continued normalcy communications home to the students. School closure

means schools don't have to provide anything for students by law. For children that could be very traumatic. **DO THE RIGHT THING:** Send home positive messages, do Facebook Live each morning like you would at school and encourage staff to stay connected.

4. **Decisions On What Is Best For Students** and don't worry about anything else. You won't lose funding during a crisis as the state has shown to be very empathetic during other National Emergencies. It is a pandemic.
5. **Track all the time you are working on Corona Virus-19;** especially extra personnel or time your staff puts in. There should be Federal and State reimbursable funding for you. **BUT YOU MUST TRACK IT.**

Have a peaceful and relaxing weekend, and thanks for all you do for students!

If you have questions or need support, please call or email us.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Timothy J. Taylor". The ink is dark and the signature is centered on the page.

Tim Taylor
SSDA Executive Director