

#2 Resolution for Stopping Community Transmission of COVID-19 Before Any Returning to Schools

Whereas, the beginning of national, regional, and local community transmission of COVID-19 were the most critical factors leading to the Bay Area’s relatively early, first-in-the-nation decision to close schools and “shelter in place” during this pandemic, which appears to have saved many lives in this area;

Whereas, during ongoing nationwide community transmission, “with few exceptions, reopening states are projected to experience exponential growth of both cases and deaths”¹;

Whereas, all members of Berkeley’s communities remain at risk of contracting COVID-19 so long as conditions of community transmission prevail and until an effective vaccine becomes widely available and availed-of;

Whereas, the risk continues that reopening schools under conditions of community spread and continued new cases of COVID-19 may likewise result in increased cases and deaths;

Whereas, even without a vaccine, some nations large and small, from New Zealand to China, have nearly achieved elimination of this disease through coherent, unified, science-based approaches to stopping disease transmission²;

Whereas, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other sources have published extensive guidelines for reopening schools safely;

Whereas, we professional educators have the obligation and duty to act in the best interests of the health and wellbeing of students, families, and the community--and resist government non-binding directives that may be driven by competing pressures not unified in service to universal health and wellbeing;

Therefore Be It Resolved That, the BFT calls for BUSD to not offer in-person learning for the first quarter of the 2020-21 school year due to the current and projected spread of the Coronavirus in Alameda County, the Bay Area, and California.

¹ Projection of COVID-19 Cases and Deaths in the US as Individual States Reopen May 4,2020
http://www.columbia.edu/~jls106/yamana_etal_reopening_projections.pdf

² National strategies of elimination of COVID-19 have shown impressive results that can yet be emulated by other nations, suggests epidemiologist Michael Baker, member of the New Zealand Ministry of Health’s Technical Advisory Group. “[T]he two big benefits of elimination, which... technically, it means 28 days with no new cases... that would be an epidemiological definition. Parts of China now have been in that situation now for some time, and certainly Taiwan is in that situation. Hong Kong is approaching that situation. It means that you prevent people getting sick, you prevent the fatalities — say, 1% of the people dying — and also you can start to get back into your normal life, and the business can start to resume, and — for these countries are now coming out into having a functioning internal economy.” https://www.democracynow.org/2020/5/26/as_new_zealand_eliminate_covid_advisor