

**DRAFT**

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City Attorney's Office

## **OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL**

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.**

**INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBERS NIKKI FORTUNATO BAS,  
SHENG THAO AND LOREN TAYLOR**

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**RESOLUTION URGING GOVERNOR NEWSOM AND THE CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO PRIORITIZE CALIFORNIA PUBLIC  
SCHOOL EDUCATORS FOR PHASE ONE COVID-19 VACCINE ACCESS**

**WHEREAS**, on March 4, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed that a State of Emergency exists in California as a result of the threat of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, as of Monday December 7, 2020 the California Department of Public Health has reported at least 1,366,435 confirmed COVID-19 cases in California, and a total of 19,935 deaths in the state; and

**WHEREAS**, in the early stages of the pandemic, local and state public health orders required the closure of public schools across the state to slow the spread of coronavirus in the community; and

**WHEREAS**, school districts and educators across the state stepped up and adapted to the significant challenges caused by school closures by shifting towards new online distance learning formats; and

**WHEREAS**, they made these strides despite the unprecedented nature of the public health crisis, and despite the historic underfunding of public education in California since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, during which previously California ranked in the top ten states in per pupil spending and has since dropped to ranking as 46 in per pupil spending in the country by 2014; and

**WHEREAS**, even with innovative distance learning measures put in place, COVID-19 school disruptions have had an adverse effect on K-12 learning, especially among low-income students and students of color; and

**WHEREAS**, while schools have been closed for nearly nine months, public school enrollment has begun to decline across the state and country, with many families

leaving public school districts to enroll in private and independent schools systems that have managed to reopen schools with government authorization and safety protocols in place; and

**WHEREAS**, school closures have had extreme ramifications on student achievement including cutting student learning time, limiting the ability of educators to provide their usual level of support, diminishing opportunities for students to develop their social and emotional skills, and increasing rates of anxiety, depression, obesity, and other serious health conditions among students; and

**WHEREAS**, these educational consequences from school closures are exponentially worse at understaffed and historically underfunded schools across the state that traditionally serve large populations of students of color and their families, who were already facing stark achievement gaps prior to the COVID crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, the disproportionate health and economic impacts of COVID-19 on Black, Latino, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Native American families, including higher rates of job loss and COVID-19 infections compounded by limited access to technology and reliable internet access, have only exacerbated the educational challenges that students of color have had to endure during this crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, if we do not act with greater urgency to resolve these disruptions to our public education system, the severe learning deficits caused by school closures could have lasting impacts on our students including persistent behavioral and academic challenges, grade repetition, and increases in school truancy, suspension, expulsion, and dropout rates longer term; and

**WHEREAS**, for many working families, the continued closure of schools has forced many parents and caregivers to make an impossible choice between leaving their jobs and foregoing their family's income, or leaving their children home alone without the care or supervision of an adult; and

**WHEREAS**, there is general agreement among parents, educators, school administrators, and public health professionals that schools should be able to reopen as long as the rates of COVID-19 transmission remain low in the general population, and there is adequate school testing, screening, monitoring, sanitation, personal protective equipment, and emergency response protocols in place to ensure that educators and students can safely return to an in-person school setting; and

**WHEREAS**, providing vaccines to all school site personnel, including teachers, paraprofessionals, janitors, and other support staff, will be one important key to reopening schools safely and efficiently and preventing school-based outbreaks of COVID-19, along with testing, contact tracing, improving ventilation in schools, creating support for small and stable cohorts of students, and other mitigation measures; and

**WHEREAS**, several pharmaceutical companies have released recent reports showing promising results that vaccines protecting against the COVID-19 virus may become available to priority populations as early as December 2020 following authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the National Institutes of Health, there are enough vaccines available to vaccinate up to 20 million people in the United States in December and those doses are likely to be distributed based on state conditions and population size; and

**WHEREAS**, because initial vaccine supply will be limited, California state health officials have developed a phased distribution plan in partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which includes three priority subgroups of health care workers, who are likely to treat or be exposed to COVID-19 patients, to receive coronavirus vaccines that begin arriving this month; and

**WHEREAS**, the definition of an “essential worker” in the distribution guidance is still being developed by state health officials; and

**WHEREAS**, public school educators are arguably among the most essential workers in our society as they not only provide an education, but also serve to protect children from hunger and other social ills, give children purpose, set them up for success as citizens, and inspire them to succeed in life; and

**WHEREAS**, while educators are generally considered essential workers, it is still unclear where educators will fall in the state’s priority ranking, which will be decided in the coming weeks; and

**WHEREAS**, education is the cornerstone of our democracy, and we must work to protect the integrity of our educational institutions by addressing the historic underfunding of our public education system and ensuring that schools are well resourced and equipped to overcome the current and future challenges presented by the COVID-19 health crisis; now, therefore, be it,

**RESOLVED**, that the Oakland City Council urges Governor Newsom, the California Department of Public Health, and all other state health officials to prioritize the recovery of our public education system by providing teachers and school support staff with vaccines immediately after health care professionals so that we can safely reopen schools and get students back into the classroom as soon as possible; and be it,

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Oakland City Council urges Governor Newsom, the California Department of Public Health, and all other state health officials to ensure that the costs of COVID-19 vaccines for all educators and school support staff be subsidized by our state and federal government to ensure equitable and timely access to these vaccines; and be it,

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Oakland City Council urges that state resources be allocated for other mitigation measures to support the safe and efficient reopening of schools as well as COVID-19 prevention in schools, including the delivery of school-centered, regular, onsite testing-for-prevention for staff, students, and school families, as well as to improve the ventilation, filtration, and indoor air quality of Oakland’s schools, and to support small and stable student cohorts, which have been shown to reduce risk and prevent COVID-19 outbreaks; and be it,

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Oakland City Council hereby directs the City Clerk to transmit copies to the Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom and to the California Department of Public Health with a request to take all actions necessary to achieve the objectives of this Resolution.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - FORTUNATO BAS, GALLO, GIBSON MCELHANEY, KALB, REID, TAYLOR,  
THAO AND PRESIDENT KAPLAN

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST:

ASHA REED  
Acting City Clerk and Clerk of the  
Council of the City of Oakland,  
California