

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON COVID-19
RECOVERY AND NEIGHBORHOOD
INVESTMENT

MOTION

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) recently announced that the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) K-12 schools will not be reopening until November, at the earliest. DPH's announcement allows schools to offer small in-person classes for children with special needs at no more than 10% capacity at a time, with priority being given to students with disabilities and students who are learning to speak English. These exemptions make it clear that there is some acknowledgment of the paramount importance of in-person instruction in a child's education and development, but does not do enough to address the whole range of children who are suffering as a result of distance learning. The cognitive and educational importance of in-person instruction are well-documented. Studies showing detriments of prolonged distance learning have caused the American Academy of Pediatrics to strongly recommend in-person instruction for younger (K-5) students.

Looking beyond the developmental importance of in-person learning, it is important to acknowledge that, as a policy, distance learning results in education outcomes that are even less equitable than those that result from the traditional educational environment. With the switch to distance learning, the achievement gap, which is an observable disparity in educational performance among subgroups of students in the United States, continues to widen. Social and economic injustices have coalesced to create an educational environment that may have disastrous outcomes for our youngest generation.

Uneven distribution of and access to communication technologies and resources, known as the digital divide, makes distance learning an unsuitable approach to education for students who are already deprived of valuable opportunities and resources in the traditional education environment. Many of these students come from families where both parents work jobs that do not afford them the privilege of working from home or if they do they cannot give the attention their child needs that schooling does. Families like these are left with few options for managing their children's education through distance learning.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health be requested to report to Council on the roadmap for the Los Angeles Unified School District's reopening, including the scientific justification for delaying reopening until mid-November.

PRESENTED BY: _____
BOB BLUMENFIELD (verbal)
Councilmember, District 3

SECONDED BY: _____
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Councilmember, 8th District