



MEDIA ADVISORY: Friday, February 26th

**OUSD Parents for Transparency and Safe Reopening to Host Rally and Press Conference
with Oakland Parents, Students, Mayor Schaaf and Community Leaders.**

Parents will ask the OUSD School Board and Superintendent to reopen OUSD schools

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February 26, OAKLAND, CA – Oakland Parents for Transparency and Safe Reopening (OUSD Parents) – a group of parents, students, and community members from across the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) – is holding a rally calling for our schools to be reopened by mid-March.

WHAT: Oakland families rally to Reopen OUSD schools

WHO: OUSD Families for Transparency and Safe Reopening

WHEN: Sunday, Feb. 28 - Rally and Press Conference at 12:00pm with

WHERE: Astro Park, 1210 Lakeshore Ave, Oakland, CA 94610

NOTES: Parents, Students, and Teachers will be available to speak to the media. Also joining OUSD Parents will be Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf and community leaders including former OUSD School Board Director Jumoke Hinton-Hodge and current OUSD School Board Director Cliff Thompson.

Since February 2, TK-6 schools in Alameda county have met the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidelines for reopening. While Covid rates have continued to fall and it is likely the county will move into the red tier in a week, 36,000 OUSD students continue to learn remotely with no agreement reached on a date to return even our youngest and most at risk learners.

[Public health experts nationwide agree](#) that reopening schools [can be \(and has been\) done safely](#) and that keeping schools closed poses far greater harm to students than any risks of

transmission associated with a return to the classroom. OUSD has told parents for months that it has the PPE necessary to return to school and that it is committed to the mitigation efforts necessary to return to in-person instruction. And yet, children in OUSD schools are still deprived the ability to learn, develop, and thrive in a classroom. As a result of nearly a year of school closures, our students are facing irreparable learning loss and harm, the effects of which will be [felt over their lifetimes](#).

School closures have also [taken a staggering toll](#) on childrens' mental health, leading to a steep rise in mental health emergency visits, anxiety and depression, and suicidal ideation. A year on Zoom has certainly been enough for our children, it is time to get OUSD kids back safely into their classrooms.

We urge our Superintendent and the OUSD School Board to take actions immediately (and to pursue *all* avenues legally available) to ensure the following:

- OUSD immediately begins a phased reopening of schools for the remainder of the 2021 Spring term, beginning with elementary schools and the most vulnerable populations, who should return to the classroom no later than March 15;
- OUSD develops a framework for ensuring teachers can obtain vaccines, prioritizing those who are returning to the classroom, but does not require full vaccination for a return to in-person instruction.

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About OUSD Parents:

- We are a group of parents from across Oakland who are committed to public education and believe our children should have access to safe, in-person education.
- To date we have 692 families across 32 schools supporting our petition to reopen schools.
- We believe in following the science—and the consensus by public health experts and medical and mental health professionals—which all tell us schools can be safely reopened now with measures in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
- Teachers and school staff should be a high priority for COVID vaccination.