

# Build the Movement to Fight the COVID-19 Pandemic!

***ELECT LEADERS fighting to stop schools from opening while the virus continues to spread!***

**Re-Elect**

**MARK**

**AIRGOOD**

for OEA Exec. Board Seat #10

**Elect**

**ADARENE**

**HOAG**

for OEA Exec. Board Seat #8

**Elect**

**TANIA**

**KAPPNER**

for OEA Vice President



# The science is clear: teachers and school staff must demand regular, universal testing for Covid-19 and aggressive contact tracing. It is the only way stop the pandemic and make our schools safe.

As politicians on both sides of the aisle focus their speeches on re-opening the economy, the death toll of the Coronavirus pandemic is continuing to rise exponentially. Trump and Pence's willful ignorance, misinformation, obstruction of mass testing and basic care, along with their naked appeals to anti-Chinese racism, have been key components to the United States status as the nation with the largest number of confirmed cases of Covid-19. As the wealthiest nation in the world, the US government's failure to provide critical resources to its people is causing rampant infection in our communities, and spreading more cases of the virus across the globe.

We will not make ourselves and our students guinea-pigs in a policy of achieving "herd immunity" at the cost of tens of thousands of lives. In Wuhan, China, no students were allowed to return to school until there had been no new cases for weeks. When a cluster of six new cases was reported over the weekend of May 6th – cases reported in people who were previously asymptomatic but then started to show symptoms -- Wuhan announced it would test all 11 million residents within 10 days. This is a serious approach. The U.S. is nowhere near close to this capacity or determination. No politician or health-care official at the federal, state, or county level, has had the will to develop the program of mass testing and tracing for Covid-19, or procure the proper equipment, to keep schools safe.

The pace at which testing is being made available to the general public is painfully slow, and remains a strong catalyst for the spread of the virus. California has been one of the worst offenders, lagging behind the majority of other

states in the per capita Covid 19 testing rate. In Northern California, a narrowly defined and increasingly inaccurate combination of related symptoms are still often required to procure a test. **Data from outbreaks across the world suggests that up to 80% of people with an active Coronavirus infection may appear asymptomatic,**<sup>1</sup> at least for several days. The test rationing of the richest state in the nation must stop now. Our people do not deserve to die because profits from the mass production of test kits are not possible.

Testing is the only way to gauge whether the virus is being eradicated from the population, and the real numbers of those infected and deceased are undoubtedly higher than what is being reported, given the lack of mass testing. The real numbers of cases and deaths are being suppressed because politicians don't want to deal honestly and forthrightly with what it will take to defeat this pandemic, avoiding increased anger and more demands on the government and the healthcare industry to do what is necessary to keep people alive.

The state and local school districts must make free mass testing available and easily accessible to every student and school employee on a regular basis, whether they are symptomatic or not, before a date is set for the reopening of schools. In-person instruction cannot resume until mass testing has been systematically conducted to ensure the pandemic is under control, and not continuing to spread.

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<sup>1</sup>Center for Evidence Based Medicine  
<https://www.cebm.net/covid-19/covid-19-what-proportion-are-asymptomatic/>

## Join the CAR CARAVAN to Demand Mass COVID-19 Testing Before Schools Reopen!

Tuesday, May 26<sup>st</sup> - 4pm-6pm  
Starting in East Oakland's hardest hit neighborhoods, to end outside District Office at 1000 Broadway.

Gather beside Elmhurst Middle School at Birch Street and 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Call or text 510-817-2617 or visit *Facebook: EON/BAMN Caucus - Defend Public Education* - for updates.

- Free mass COVID -19 testing for all!
- No reopening of the economy or schools while the Pandemic continues to spread!
- Nationalize the health care system!
- Free health care for all!
- Release all immigrant detainees - No COVID-19 death camps.

As teachers in Oakland, we must be especially vigilant in guarding against the spread of the disease. Black and Latino communities are developing higher infection rates, and much higher death rates, due to the myriad of inequities that result from the deep and persistent institutional racism of our society. We as teachers cannot play any role in endangering students or their loved ones. Many Special Education students have disabilities and health conditions that make them especially vulnerable to an infection becoming deadly. And while young people on the whole may be comparatively less vulnerable to dying from the disease, they can suffer long term health consequences, and they are most likely to be asymptomatic carriers which spread the sickness without anyone knowing.

Schools are perfect vectors to escalate the spread of the virus throughout an entire community. None of the safety measures – distancing, rotating students, masks and cleaning hands – are sufficient to stop the virus in any kind of institutional setting,



much less one with young children who do not have the capacity to make adult judgments about taking personal precautions. These ideas being floated by administration and government officials have utterly no basis in reality.

Yet, Governor Newsom and Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond have already started talking about opening the schools in August! This is not acceptable. We must take whatever action is necessary to prevent such criminal disregard for life from being pushed through. If the schools open with a paltry set of ineffective “safety” measures in place, then the Trump program of utter disregard for life will win, and the economy will reopen completely. The OEA and other teachers’ unions can play a key role in stopping this. We, like health care workers, are on the front lines of this crisis. We must stand-up and defend our members and families.

Unfortunately, the unions have been far too complacent. In a May 14<sup>th</sup> press release, California Teachers Association (CTA) President E. Toby Boyd states that the measures that must be taken before schools reopen are “... *deep cleaning and sanitizing of school campuses and busses (and) having the proper personal protective equipment (PPE), social and physical distancing in classrooms and workspaces...*”. There is not a word about mass testing. This program will not keep our students, staff, and families safe. Wearing masks with complete consistency and maintaining strict social distancing is impossible in a school setting, and even if it were, these measures are not

sufficient to end the pandemic without massive testing and tracing programs.

Healthcare workers are still being forced to carry on their work without the proper protective equipment, risking their lives, the lives of patients, and the general public. Immigrants in concentration camps across the country face certain mass genocide in what are already deplorable inhumane conditions unless they are all released. Our movement must make clear now that saving human lives and providing for human need must override market profits.

We must stand up for the lives of our communities. Elect leaders who will organize to defend the

welfare and lives of OEA Members, students, and families. We are committed to making this fight. We have a long record of struggle – against the expansion of charter schools, in defense of special education students and programs, for our members’ rights, and against settling in the last contract struggle for far less than we could have won. We stand consistently for union democracy and the decision-making power of the elected Rep Council. We raised the resolution that passed overwhelmingly in the May Rep Council to demand – No Return to School Without Mass Covid-19 Testing. Vote Mark Airgood, Adarene Hoag and Tania Kappner. We will make this fight.

**Vote May 15<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> – Ballot in your personal email –  
Search “OEA ballot”**

**Equal Opportunity Now/By Any Means Necessary (EON/BAMN) Caucus**

Call : 510-817-2617

Facebook at EON/BAMN – Defend Public Education

5/15/2020