

Real Solutions for Students, Schools, and our City

The Mayor of San Jose recently formed a 501c4 to “advocate for safely reopening schools” much to the surprise of school board members, superintendents, parents, and teachers. We, the undersigned school board members representing school districts in the City of San Jose and Santa Clara County, are deeply disappointed with the mayor’s decision to politicize the reopening of schools and angered that he would do so under the guise of equity.

In his petition Mayor Liccardo suggests we must reopen our schools as if no one has already been working on this or has ever thought of such a thing. However, he must know he has no real jurisdiction over public education here in San Jose. Why then would he start an organization with the ability to raise money and lobby? What is his true purpose?

Know that we would welcome real support such as:

- Using his political power as the mayor of the tenth largest city to demand increased vaccination supply from the state and feds would be absolutely amazing.
- Supporting essential workers who are the families sending their children to our schools would have been incredibly helpful, too.
- Working on real solutions that include ensuring our most disadvantaged children have shelter and a safe place to lay their heads falls under a mayor’s jurisdiction. With a housing and homeless crisis at levels beyond critical and expected to worsen with the ongoing pandemic, this should be the first to-do item for a real solutions-oriented mayor.

In reality, his petition does nothing to solve the many issues before us in dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 on our school-aged children and especially “the region’s low income families.” Again, we wonder about the mayor’s true motive when mentioning school children, particularly our most vulnerable and youngest kids from our hardest hit neighborhoods.

To be clear, “safely re-opening schools” is already under way, and has been since March 2020. Superintendents, school board members, teachers, and parents have been hard at work detailing how and when schools will reopen for in-person learning – safely – not only for our students and their families, but also school staff.

How upsetting it is that this is the moment the mayor weighs in, when we can say first-hand that we are closer than we have ever been to in-person instruction. Does he really not know that our schools have been putting on-site safety plans together, developing MOU’s with teachers and staff on how best to provide a safer education for all during a world-wide pandemic, upgrading air-filtration systems, and meeting with parents to gain their important and helpful input. The list of work goes on and on. This is what true collaboration looks like.

Let's keep the political grandstanding out of our local communities, and instead work together toward common goals. We stand ready and willing to do just that, as we have been since school closures back in March of 2020; this is not new to us.

We genuinely ask all local leaders to join us as we work for equitable, safe, and real solutions to the challenges that are ahead. We still have a long way to go to successfully navigate our community recovery and our children deserve no less.

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