



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT

Virginia Drake  
Public Affairs and Communications Director  
California Transit Association  
M: (914) 924-0120  
Email: virginia@caltransit.org

**\*\*STATEMENT\*\***

## **Public Transit is Essential to Reopening of Schools**

### ***Prioritize Frontline Transit Workers Being Called Upon to Deliver Millions of Students and Teachers Back to the Classroom in Vaccine Distribution Plan***

**Sacramento** – In response to the ongoing negotiations between Governor Gavin Newsom and the State Legislature over a proposal to reopen K-12 schools, this afternoon the California Transit Association [submitted a letter](#) urging the state to grant frontline transit workers priority access to the COVID-19 vaccine alongside other transportation professionals in the education and child care sector.

The California Department of Public Health's current guidance provides priority access to the vaccine to transportation professionals in the education and child care sector, but limits this prioritization to, "[a]ny other workers involved in child and/or student care, including school bus drivers and monitors, crosswalk guards, etc." Without amending the guidance to specify frontline transit workers, they will continue to be ineligible for priority access to the vaccine under the state's current vaccine distribution plan, even as schools reopen. The Association issued the following statement:

"For communities across our state, the transit bus is the school bus," said Michael Pimentel, the Association's Executive Director. "If we're focused on reopening schools safely, then lawmakers must also acknowledge the role California's transit agencies have long played in transporting millions of students to and from the classroom each day. Public transit is also the crux of delivering equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine – including those being allocated for teachers. Frontline transit workers stand ready to do their part to support school reopenings, but we must protect our industry's workers with priority access to the vaccine."

Public transit agencies statewide provide millions of trips to students each year. A snapshot of the number of trips provided and/or breadth of school service is detailed below:

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- Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District – 1.8 million boardings/year (K-12 students)
- Long Beach Transit – 400,000 boardings/year (K-12 students)
- Omnitrans – 1.02 million boardings/year (K-12 Students)
- Orange County Transportation Authority – 3.7 million boardings/year (K-12 students)
- San Mateo County Transit District – 2.4 million boardings/year (K-12 students)
- San Diego Metropolitan Transit System – 7.7 million boardings/year (K-12 students)
- San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency – Every middle school and high school in the San Francisco Unified School District is served by at least one Muni route
- Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority – 2.32 million boardings/year (K-12 students)
- Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District – 484,000 boardings/year (K-12 students)
- Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus – 350,000 boardings/year (K-12 students)

More information – covering additional transit agencies as well as student ridership for college, university and community college students – will be available to the media upon request.

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*Michael Pimentel is the executive director of the California Transit Association, a 501(c)(6) non-profit trade organization comprised of nearly 250 member organizations, including all of the state's largest urban transit operators, as well as dozens of transit agencies in suburban and rural areas. Its membership also extends to include commuter rail agencies, transit support groups, national and international transit suppliers, and government agencies. The Association is the leading advocate on behalf of public transit in California, representing transit's interests before the California State Legislature, the Governor and regulatory agencies on the local, state and federal levels.*