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TSTA: Slow down and put safety first in school reopenings

Texas State Teachers Association President Noel Candelaria released the following statement:

"Everyone wants to see schools reopen, but they must reopen safely. The Texas State Teachers Association is calling on Gov. Greg Abbott to slow down and put safety first before he allows school districts to begin reopening campuses for the fall semester. The governor reopened restaurants, bars, gyms and other businesses too soon and the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations soared. We can't afford to let that happen in our schools. Millions of lives are at stake, beginning with our children, our educators, their families and communities.

"Texas obviously has not seen the end of this pandemic, and no one knows what August, the normal start of the fall semester, will bring. Regardless of the date, no school must reopen until the pandemic has clearly begun to subside and strict safety standards are in place for that campus, including required mask use for students, employees and visitors; regular testing of everyone entering the school for COVID symptoms; and strict social distancing in classrooms and other locations.

"We are asking the governor to clarify whether the order for face coverings he issued last week applies to school campuses. If not, the order must be amended to include schools and the age limit exception removed for schools. Teachers must be given the authority to decide whether children younger than 10 in their classes must wear masks.

"Teachers and students who fear it is too risky for their health to return to campuses must be allowed to teach and learn remotely and be provided with the resources they need."

TSTA's standards for safe schools: https://tsta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/TSTAstandardsForSafeSchools.pdf