

Reopening Message to Families

July 17, 2020

Summary of Key Content:

- LGSUHSD schools will reopen in a distance/online learning model for the Fall of 2020
- We plan to gradually introduce in-person instruction and activities through a four-phased approach
- We have no set timeframe for returning to in-person instruction - this will be dictated by public health conditions and local and state guidelines and driven by science
- A new set of regulations issued by the Governor today will likely extend the duration of our distance learning approach
- We will communicate more detailed plans for the beginning of the school year by the end of July

Full Message:

Good morning,

I hope that you and your family are enjoying summer and finding time to relax in these unusual and ever-evolving circumstances. On Tuesday, July 14th I recommended to our District's Board of Trustees that we begin the 2020-21 school year in a distance/online learning model. Our Board is supportive of this plan. This is not the way that any of us want to open the school year because we all miss the face to face interaction which has been so limited since March. Despite this and given the recent resurgence of the COVID19 virus around our nation, state, and county, I believe that reopening in a distance learning model is the best approach at this time. The slide deck from our presentation to the School Board can be found [via this link](#). Our phased reopening model includes four phases:

- Phase 1: Reopen on August 13th with robust distance learning for all students.
- Phase 2: As conditions permit, bring targeted students back for support and/or SEL activities.
- Phase 3: As conditions permit, bring all students back in-person in a part-time/blended model.
- Phase 4: As conditions permit, bring all students back in-person in a full-time modified or normal schedule.

Some districts have chosen to articulate specific timelines for reevaluating in-person instruction - indicating that they will stay in a distance learning model for the entire first semester, for example. Our goal is to get our students back to some form of in-person instruction as soon as it is safe and feasible for us to do so and in light of this, we have chosen not to establish a predetermined timeline. We have learned and believe that this is an incredibly unpredictable and dynamic public health crisis and any predetermined timeframe is likely to be irrelevant moving forward. Rather, we believe that a flexible model is the best approach. The timing of any movement from one phase to the next (forward or backward) will be based upon current

community health conditions and guidelines and any movement between phases that will create significant disruption for our students, families, and staff will come with sufficient lead time to allow everyone (including our school district) to prepare.

Importantly, just this afternoon, Governor Newsom issued new requirements stating that there may be no in-person instruction in any school in any county that is on the state watchlist (as is Santa Clara County). Under these rules, no in-person instruction can take place until the county has been off the watchlist for at least 14 consecutive days and this will primarily be determined by a trend of decreasing COVID cases in the county. In light of this new information, it is likely that we may be in a distance learning model longer than originally anticipated. Our decisions around a return to in-person instruction will abide by state and county guidelines and will still be driven by the goal of returning to school as soon as it is safe to do so.

My recommendation to begin the year in a distance learning model is based upon the current state and county guidance and requirements related to reopening and upon the following key points. Our approach:

- protects the health and safety of students and staff
- allows a singular focus on developing high-quality, robust online teaching & learning which will benefit us in each of the phases
- allows our organization to learn how to bring students and staff back safely in a gradual manner rather than all at once
- aligns with the approach of other neighboring high schools
- provides maximum flexibility and maximizes our chances to succeed in maintaining safety and educational quality

Our unanticipated experience with online teaching and learning last spring gave us crucial experience and we've learned from our successes and our mistakes and this will benefit us moving forward. While we will continue to learn, I fully expect that the online experience this fall will be more robust and coordinated. Our staff has worked throughout the summer to develop expertise and tools and develop plans for reopening. We will continue this work through the remainder of summer and throughout the fall to ensure that we continue to improve our practices.

Please know that we will provide more practical details (daily schedule, online teaching and learning expectations, grading practices, etc.) in the coming days and weeks, including information on modified orientation and school business days for our students. I fully realize that many of us are anxious about the level of uncertainty that this crisis has created for all of us on so many levels - I certainly feel this personally. It's important to remember that virtually everyone else in our community, our nation, and globally are feeling the same level of uncertainty and while it can be unsettling, it also provides us an opportunity to model for our young people the importance of adaptability, collaboration, creative problem-solving, and positivity. We are in this together and together we will overcome the challenges we face. Thank you for your ongoing

support of our students and our schools.

Michael Grove, Ed.D.
LGSUHSD Superintendent