



Reopening Update - 12-17-2020 - Message to Families & Staff

December 17, 2020

I am writing today to provide a brief update on our reopening planning in light of the ongoing Covid surge and our County's move back into the state's more restrictive Purple Tier. I also want to provide information about the implications of recent developments for the spring semester and for fall 2021.

Key Points:

- Our County's move back to the Purple Tier means that we cannot legally reopen more broadly until our County has been in the Red Tier for at least two weeks.
- It is impossible to accurately predict when our county will return to the Red Tier but public health experts are advising that this may not occur until February or later.
- Given this, we will maintain the status quo schedule when school resumes for second semester in January.
- We've paused many of the cohorts that had previously been meeting in-person on our campuses and these cohorts will resume no earlier than January 19th, 2021 and the resumption of them will be dependent upon the community health conditions at that time.
- When we do resume in-person cohorts, we will continue to seek to expand the availability of additional cohorts.
- To date, we've had seven reported cases of Covid among our students and staff.
- CIF postponed the start of fall sport until later in the winter/spring and the state released guidance for the resumption of youth sports.
- The initiation of a nationwide vaccination program increases our optimism regarding the expansion of in-person activities this spring and creates cautious optimism that we can fully reopen in a "normal" way in August 2021.

Full Text:

Return to In-person Learning:

- Our county's November return to the Purple Tier does not have a significant impact on us as a school district. The primary implication of this is that we cannot legally proceed with the next phase in reopening (all students back on campus on a part-time basis) until our county has been in the Red Tier for at least two weeks.
- While it's impossible to predict when our county will move back into the Red Tier, given anticipated increases in community spread of Covid due to holiday gatherings and travel, public health officials are advising that it appears realistic that it may February or later before we move back into the Red Tier.

- Given this, we will maintain the status quo schedule when school resumes for second semester in January.

In-person Cohorts:

- As discussed in our [November 20 communication](#), we had close to 1000 students participating in voluntary in-person cohorts. While we are legally allowed to continue these cohorts under current orders, we decided to pause most of these cohorts after Thanksgiving in order to assist with the effort to prevent community spread of the virus, particularly in light of the crisis in hospital capacity.
- We have continued to run a small number of in-person cohorts that we consider to be essential to the academic success of some of our students.
- The paused cohorts will resume no earlier than January 19th, 2021 and the resumption of them will be dependent upon the community health conditions at that time.
- When we do resume in-person cohorts, we will continue to seek to expand the availability of additional cohorts.

Covid Case Update & Reporting:

- As of December 17, 2020, we've had seven reported cases of Covid among our students and staff, six of which have been reported since November 10th so we've experienced a recent escalation of reported cases that reflects the escalation seen in our state and nation.
- It is highly likely that there have been other cases of Covid among our students and staff which have gone unreported which highlights the need for any Covid case to be reported to the school contact listed below - even if the student or staff member has not been to campus.
- Having this information helps us to understand the level of spread among our school community which, in turn, helps to inform our reopening planning as well as allowing us to better protect the health and safety of everyone.

COVID-19 Reporting Contacts:

Los Gatos High School: Adam Minyard aminyard@lgsuhd.org or 408-354-2730, x-310

Saratoga High School: Brian Thompson bthompson@lgsuhd.org or 408-867-3411, x-209

District Office: Jane Marashian jmarashian@lgsuhd.org or 408-354-5980

OR Brian Safine bsafine@lgsuhd.org or 408 402-6309

Athletic Update:

- Early in the fall, the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) had postponed fall sports with a tentative timeline to begin the season on December 10th, 2020.
- Given the surge in Covid cases and pending anticipated guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), in late November CIF announced that the start of the fall/winter sports season would be postponed and will be re-evaluated in January.
- On Monday of this week, CDPH released [guidance on youth sports](#) that outlines the conditions for when and how youth sports might resume.

- State CIF, our local league, and SCC Public Health Department will review this guidance and develop more specific guidance for our area and our schools.
- While timelines are unknown, the state guidance does provide hope that we may be able to resume some of our athletics at some point in the spring.

Vaccines:

- While the timeline is unknown, the initiation of Covid vaccination across our nation does provide hope that we may be able to further expand in-person instruction in the spring.
- The State of California has yet to release information on when school staff will have access to vaccines, but there are some indications that this may be available to school staff as early as February which would be great news in terms of overcoming some health and safety concerns.
- Some recent reports indicate that vaccines may be widely available to the general public (including our students) as early as late May/early June.
- Public health officials do warn that the actual timeline for the availability of vaccines will be determined by the approval and availability of additional vaccines beyond the one currently approved.

Fall 2021 Update:

- If the vaccine rollout proceeds smoothly and efficiently, I am cautiously optimistic that we can return to a “normal” model of in-person school in August for the 2021-22 school year.
- We will keep our fingers crossed and keep working to do everything we can to bring back our students and staff in a safe manner.
- As an FYI, the Board of Trustees has approved the 2021-22 school year calendar, linked [here](#).

General Reminders:

- The current county and state guidelines restrict gatherings with others outside of your immediate household. Please be conscious of this as we enter the holiday season.
- The current county and state shelter-in-place orders restrict non-essential travel and require that students or staff who travel more than 150 miles outside of our county to quarantine for ten days after returning to the county.
- A reminder that we expect students to have their camera on during online class sessions in order to support engagement. Obviously, there are circumstances when this may not be appropriate due to privacy concerns or due to Wifi limitations, but these situations are exceptions that should be discussed directly with teachers.

Thank you for your ongoing patience and support as we move through these difficult circumstances and decisions. I wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Mike Grove

Michael Grove, Ed.D., Superintendent