

Year-End District Message  
June 11, 2020

Dear PUSD Families,

This final week of the school year has been a mixture of celebration and bittersweet emotions as we bring a close to this challenging and unprecedented year. This is not how we anticipated or hoped our school year would end, but I'm very proud of how our staff and students made the most of the situation, especially for our graduating and promoting students. I appreciated how our schools were able to pull off such personal and unique drive-thru parades and videos. I loved witnessing the joy and excitement displayed by students and their families as they returned to their schools in celebration of their achievements and accomplishments, along with their fellow classmates, teachers, staff, and administrators.

### **California's School Reopening Guidelines**

This week, the [California Department of Education](#) and the [California Department of Public Health](#) released guidelines on how to safely reopen schools. As it stands now, the guidelines include recommendations such as temperature checks, frequent hand washing, cleaning of surfaces, students maintaining physical distance, and staff or students wearing masks or face shields when physical distance is not practical. The guidelines illustrate different school schedule scenarios that may be taken into consideration as districts develop their plans to reopen schools. It is important to note that this guidance is interim. These guidelines and considerations are based on the best available public health data at this time. Thus, they can change and be updated at any time. As you can imagine, the fluidity of the guidelines and the rapidly changing information makes the planning for the safe reopening of our schools, a logistical challenge for a district our size.

So what does this mean for Poway Unified? Ultimately, school districts must abide by and follow the county health department guidelines. We will work alongside the San Diego County Public Health Department and San Diego County Office of Education to create a plan to safely reopen schools in the Fall. The County of San Diego has revised [health orders](#) which allows schools to reopen as of June 12, 2020. Knowing that this was imminent, PUSD created a school reopening committee which has met several times to begin analyzing potential scenarios while considering safety measures that need to be in place. As businesses in our state and county continue to reopen, we expect guidelines for schools to continue loosening as well. We will communicate regularly as we learn new information over the summer.

### **What is the Plan for Fall 2020?**

With 59% of families stating in our last survey that they would like students to return full time in the Fall, our goal is to bring our students and staff back to school to the fullest extent possible within the guidelines. According to the survey, we also are aware that 41% of our families prefer either a blended or fully virtual learning option to continue.

As of now, we are planning for multiple scenarios. However, you can imagine how complicated planning for the details of each of these scenarios presents. Thus, our staff will continue to plan and present various options to the Board and community as they are developed, keeping in mind that plans can dramatically change as we near the start of the school year in August. As plans start to solidify, parents will have the opportunity to select their final preferences via a second survey. Those options will likely be either full in-person instruction or fully virtual. The District has analyzed various blended learning models, and they do not appear to be viable for Districtwide implementation. The blended learning

model may be implemented on a smaller scale for specific programs. One thing we know for certain: the school year will start as scheduled on August 19 (July 16 for Abraxas and August 1 for Valley).

### **Summer Programs**

Next week, our Extended Student Services (ESS) summer camps are opening in-person with several modifications: including smaller adult to student ratios, temperature checks, frequent hand washing and sanitization of surfaces, more outdoor, open air time, physical distancing when possible, and limited interaction between classes. Staff will be wearing masks or face shields, but face coverings are optional for students. The implementation of this program with smaller groups of students, will help us with our planning and preparations for the reopening of our schools. Tomorrow, registration for our in-person Youth Enrichment Summer Camps opens online via the Poway Adult School website, and their safety procedures will mirror our ESS programs.

This worldwide pandemic was life-changing for all of us, especially our children. They had to adjust, overcome, build resilience, and persevere through it all. We are building stronger, action-minded future leaders for our world. We came together as a community to ensure that our schools, even virtually, could still set an example for other districts to follow and be regarded as one of the top performing school districts in the country. I am proud of all that we have achieved together and were able to accomplish, in spite of how the school year had to end. I look forward to the reopening of our schools, and wish you and your family a safe and happy summer.

Sincerely,  
Marian Kim Phelps, Ed.D.  
Superintendent