



BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Board of Education

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February 5, 2021

Dear Bonita Unified Staff and Families,

Since March 13, 2020, the health orders from the State of California and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) have changed numerous times. To say these changes have led to confusion and frustration for all stakeholders is an understatement.

In January, Governor Newsom implemented a plan that would allow school districts to reopen schools in a hybrid format provided the county and school districts met specific criteria. This criterion includes having an adjusted case rate of under 25 per 100,000 residents to open elementary schools, and under 7 per 100,000 residents to open middle and high schools. The current adjusted case rate in Los Angeles County is 38.7. Although no one can be certain, we anticipate that the adjusted case rate will continue to drop in Los Angeles County over the next several weeks to under 25.

Public Health has prioritized vaccination for all school employees placing them in Tier 1B, which is the next eligible group. The District has entered into a partnership with Mercy Pharmacy, located in San Dimas, to help obtain and administer vaccines to all staff members. The required paperwork with Mercy Pharmacy is complete, and we now await further direction and a firm start date from Public Health. Vaccinating our staff is a priority to protect our students, the families of our students, our staff, and their families.

As you can imagine, reopening schools after being shut down for more than 11 months will not be like flipping a light switch from “off” to “on”. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Bonita Unified School District's mission has been to reopen in a **meaningful** and **sustainable** way, and we are still committed to that promise. As always, our number one priority is the health and safety of our students and staff.

With high anticipation that the vaccine will be readily available for our staff and that the adjusted case rate will soon be under 25 in Los Angeles County, we are announcing a target date of April 5, 2021, for the reopening of our elementary schools. This target date is contingent upon the case rate decreasing and staying under 25, and vaccinations being made readily available to our staff.

The reopening will be for face to face instruction for elementary students in a hybrid model. For families that wish to continue in a distance learning format, it will still be available to them. More details will be forthcoming in the near future regarding the hybrid model.

I realize an announcement like this prompts many questions. Over the next several weeks, you can expect multiple communications from the District and your child's school outlining our plans in more detail. You can also expect a survey indicating your interest in this option, in order to give us a clear picture of the number of students that will be returning in a hybrid model.

For now, secondary schools cannot reopen until the rates of confirmed COVID-19 cases drop substantially (under 7 in the adjusted case rate). If permissible by state and county guidelines, Bonita Unified will provide more enrichment activities for our secondary students, enabling clubs to meet face to face, offering in-person tutoring,

“Preparing Every Student To Live Their Purpose”

and expanding activities for our athletes. Also, our three high schools are actively working with their seniors to develop ways to have a meaningful close to the school year, including graduation plans, activities, and much more.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that this rollout/reopening into a hybrid model will not be perfect. There is no playbook for us to rely upon. It will take all stakeholder groups including parents, students, teachers, classified teams, and administration to reopen successfully. Our principals, teachers, and classified teams are actively preparing for April 5, 2021, so we ask for your patience and grace as we begin the process of welcoming back our elementary students.

On behalf of the Bonita Unified School District Board of Education, we thank you for your support, trust, and partnership in preparing our students to live their purpose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl J. Coles', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Carl J. Coles
Superintendent