



## Message from Superintendent, Dr. Nancy Lynch Friday, August 14, 2020

### Update on Waiver Process and Parent Distance Learning Education Night

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are all looking forward to our students returning to school on Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup>. We will be starting in a distance learning model through at least September 8<sup>th</sup>, as per Marin Public Health requirements, although we are eager to see your students' shining faces as teachers will be meeting with them live (virtually) in meaningful ways five days per week to provide interaction, instruction and progress monitoring.

#### **Update on Waiver Process:**

On July 17, Governor Newsom announced that schools could return to site-based instruction when their county has been off of the California Department of Public Health monitoring list for 14 consecutive days. A county is placed on the monitoring list when there are greater than 100 positive cases per 100,000 residents over a two-week period. Marin county is currently on the state monitoring list and may be removed from this list if we achieve fewer than 19 cases per day, over a two-week period, according to Dr. Willis, Marin Public Health Officer.

County Public Health officers were given permission to grant waivers to schools if their positive case numbers were less than 200 per 100,000 residents over a two-week period. The draft waiver process in Marin county includes adherence to:

- Marin Public Health Guidelines published on August 12<sup>th</sup>
- COVID-19 testing capabilities that meet Public Health recommendations
- Guidance from the Public Health Officer to determine triggers for switching back to distance learning and when to close schools to site based instruction
- Overview of the school's unique situation, experience operating student programs during the pandemic, and how the school will meet the needs of students, teachers, staff and the community
- Superintendent has consulted with labor, parents and community organizations

In conversations with Dr. Willis, superintendents have asked for clarity about what "consult" means with labor, parents and the community. He has reiterated that it means there is consensus in the community. Applications will not be approved if there is not

consensus since it would be divisive to the community.

At the Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup> Board of Trustees meeting, I was asked by a quorum of the Board to explore this process by starting the conversation and surveying our District. Surveys were sent to all district staff and parents on Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup> to ask if individuals were in favor of starting the waiver process to return to in-person instruction prior to Marin County coming off the state monitoring list.

Results of this survey strongly indicate that we do not currently have consensus in our community. 593 parents responded to the survey with 59.7% wanting the district to apply for a waiver; and 94 employees responded to the survey with 11.7% wanting the district to apply for a waiver. As the superintendent, I am not in a position to seek a waiver at this time, since we do not meet the consensus required in our parent community alone, for waiver approval. It is also important to understand that Dr. Willis has stated that there should not be an expectation that waivers will be automatically approved, as recent case data also plays a large factor in the decision-making process. If approved by Marin Public Health, applications must then also be reviewed and approved by the California Department of Public Health as a condition of final approval.

With so many differing variables in our community at present, I ask that we all come together with one purpose, to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our county. This is the safest and surest way that our children can return to school. As a District, I am hopeful we can continue to work together to safely reopen schools with our phased reopening model.

Teachers are thoughtfully preparing for the start of the school year, and I have seen a number of them turning their classrooms into virtual learning centers. They are excited to meet their new students and begin to establish a community of learners who are going to be guided and inspired to discover new concepts and experiences this year. Through each of our phases, students will receive the rigor, support, and focus on the whole child that RUSD families have cherished and come to expect. Thank you for your support and kindness as we all move through this extended time of uncertainty.

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### **Parent Distance Learning Education Night**

Parents, please join our webinar on Thursday, August 20th at 7:00pm to learn how you can support your child with technology during distance learning this fall. Some of the topics covered include:

#### **Best practices for using Zoom during live classes**

- Overview of some of the essential apps your child will be using
- Tips about setting up a successful learning environment for your child in your home

How to access important information from within Alma (our district's student information system)

To register, please [\*\*click on this link\*\*](#). If you can't make it to the live webinar, you can still register and you will automatically receive a recording of the meeting by email.

Warm regards,

Nancy Lynch, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

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