



LIBERTY UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
20 Oak Street ♦ Brentwood, California 94513 ♦ (925) 634-2166
Office of the Superintendent



9/24/2020

TO: Members of the Governing Board
FROM: Eric Volta, Superintendent
SUBJECT: Board Update

Dear Board,

It is our goal, for the good of our students and community, to begin a face to face instruction at a time that balances the physical safety of our employees and students with the academic, social, and emotional health of our students. Under the current “Blueprint for a Safer Economy,” there are only two board meetings before we may be allowed to return.

To accomplish this goal I propose that the Board of Education select a date in the future to begin face-to-face instruction if allowed by county health orders. The face to face instruction under the current guidelines would be under the hybrid model that was discussed at the July 6 special board meeting. The suggested return to face to face instruction date would be January 12, 2021, or, the fourth “A-day” of the second semester. Given the current trend in COVID-19 transmissions, January may see Contra Costa County in the “moderate” stage in California’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy.

Rationale for waiting until January:

Educationally

- Our teachers and other members of our workforce have created a systematic approach to distance learning, moving to a hybrid schedule mid-semester would further confuse the classroom processes and protocols that teachers have worked hard to develop.
- Pacing discussions will need to be had with our teacher leaders regarding the every other day approach to asynchronous, aka at-home, learning time.
- Under the previous guidelines, quarantining close contacts of positive COVID-19 students/staff for 14 days would prove disruptive in regards to lesson delivery, not only for a potential quarantined class but for other classes that share a quarantined teacher. Systems for remote learning will need to be established for quarantined students, teachers, and staff.
- Under the A1-A2-B1-B2 hybrid model that was previously adopted, with the Thanksgiving Holiday, students will not see their individual teacher for almost two weeks just prior to the end of the semester.
- Teachers will have time to ponder the necessary adjustments in lesson planning, Canvas inputs, teaching methods, etc. to go from DL to Hybrid.

Administratively

- Not all educators will be able to return for a variety of reasons even though the Federal COVID leave will have expired. Time will be needed to find substitutes and/or temporary replacements for those that are not able to return. A January date will give Human Resources the needed time to survey staff and take the necessary actions.
- January may see a few more potential temporary teachers that graduate mid-year from their higher institutions.
- Having a targeted start date at the start of the semester will give site administrators time to adjust master schedules if needed.
- All students may not be able to return. Students opting out of returning to face to face instruction will need to be addressed regarding their placement and graduation status.
- This will give the district time to assess the additional technology needs for conducting class face to face and remotely simultaneously.
- SB 98 engagement log completion methods may have to be revisited. We are just now implementing the needed logs to meet the statute.
- Our transportation schedules and availability will need to be further worked out given the social distancing restrictions for bus passengers and drivers.
- By starting the second week of the new semester we will have one week back together to implement the necessary changes. Teachers will not be expected to plan during the scheduled break.

Emotionally

- Selecting a date in January may alleviate some of the uncertainty of returning to school.
- For families and educators looking forward to the return of students, this gives them a return date to look forward to.
- For those that are hesitant to return, time may heal if our metrics continue to improve.
- For those that are opposed to returning this gives them time to look at educational options.

We all know that things may change and the Governor may pass another reopening plan if pressured, but our decision will have been made and we can adjust. We will have already spent a semester on DL and returning to it will be easier than adapting to a hybrid on short notice. With a start date set, I would have no issue with allowing extra-curricular activities to begin in November/December, under whatever the health orders are, to prepare for the January return to school even though face to face instruction is not occurring.