



AMADOR COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent, Amy L. Slavensky, Ph.D.

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PREPARE, SUPPORT, INSPIRE!

Hello Amador County Public Schools Families and Staff,

As you know, we are experiencing a very unique time in our country and things are changing almost daily related to the pandemic and its impact on public school finance in California, how we begin school in August and so much more. We are committed to providing information as we have it and will continue do this through email, our social media, and our wonderful media partners at the Ledger Dispatch and KVGC. Here is some information for today.

Two stakeholder committees are meeting to explore various scenarios for the reopening of our schools in August. One committee represents teachers and staff, and the other committee represents parents/guardians and our school communities. Together, our goal is to return students to our physical classrooms, in some form, as soon as possible while maintaining the health and safety of our students and staff. The committee discussions are including dialogue about the family and staff survey data (see attached), meeting CDC guidelines and state regulations, concerns about liabilities and liability waivers, our budget situation given the pandemic-induced recession, and associated costs with reopening schools.

We face several challenges related to reopening our schools this August. Because the COVID-19 circumstances are constantly evolving, we're not sure yet what the state will allow in August. We are working with the information we have at this time and hoping for the best. We have been informed by our insurance carrier that the CDC guidelines for reopening schools must be followed. We have also been informed that offering families a waiver to attend school and not follow the CDC guidelines is not an option. We understand there are some school districts that are allowing waivers or are choosing to open without following the guidelines. We will continue to look into this to see if this might become an option for us.

Two additional aspects that make reopening our schools such a challenging decision include:

Equity - When considering how to reopen our schools, we need to take all students into account including students with disabilities, students who do not have internet access due to their home location, and students without transportation to school if it is not provided by the district.

Our Current Fiscal Reality - On March 11, 2020, the district certified its second interim budget report as positive, meeting the state required reserve fund level. Very soon after that, the nation faced an economic downturn with the hit from COVID-19. As we are facing severe revenue cuts by the state, costs for operating schools are going up. Mr. Critchfield, our CBO, recently shared estimated annual costs for increased custodial services and personal protective equipment (PPE), both necessary when following the CDC guidelines. For example, an estimated annual PPE cost is approximately \$200,000 for face masks, gloves, disinfecting spray, thermometers, paper towels, and hand sanitizer.

As we are meeting with our stakeholder committees about the reopening of our schools in August, we understand that our students want to return to school. We want the same and we will do everything we can to explore the possible scenarios while ensuring the safety of all staff and students. Thank you for all you are doing to stay safe and well.

Sincerely,

Dr. Amy Slavensky, Superintendent of Schools