



AMADOR COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent, Amy L. Slavensky, Ph.D.

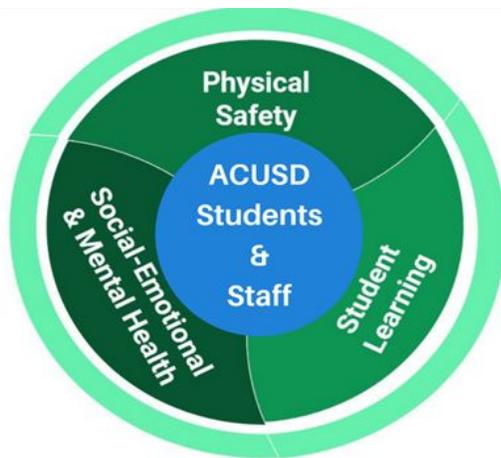
217 Rex Avenue, Jackson, CA 95642 | (209) 257-5353 | Fax (209) 257-5360 | www.amadorcoe.org

PREPARE, SUPPORT, INSPIRE!

October 21, 2020

Dear ACUSD Families and Staff,

During the September 23, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting, an important discussion took place about our Phased School Reopening Plan. You can find our presentation and listen to a recording of the meeting on our website [here](#). At this meeting, the Board approved a plan to bring a small population of our students in greatest need back to our school campuses beginning **Monday, October 19th**. The Board also made a decision to invite all grades TK-12 students back to school campuses in a hybrid model (part-time in-person learning and part-time distance learning) on **Monday, November 16th**, with the option to remain in distance learning.



Since this announcement, we have held three Town Hall Meetings for families and provided health and safety training for all staff. We have heard many questions and have responded with several FAQ documents to help answer these questions. You can find these FAQs and other helpful information [here](#).

As we plan for reopening, we continue to focus on physical safety, student learning, and social-emotional and mental health. We continue to work closely with the Amador County Public Health Officer Dr. Rita Kerr who will provide another COVID-19 update at our next Board Meeting on Wednesday, November 4, 2020.

Some have asked, “How is the hybrid model an improvement over distance learning when the kids will have less contact time with their teacher?” and “Why are we doing this now? Why not wait until January after the holidays?” Those are great questions. I believe the move to hybrid is not so much about the quality of education, but rather it is our best, possible next step in the direction of getting back on school campuses. Many children and families are greatly struggling with distance learning, and some, I believe, are suffering untold circumstances in their homes. As we make this transition, phase by allowable phase, we will also gradually return to the high-quality educational experience for all students that we knew pre-pandemic, if not better.

There are five important principles that guide our everyday work as we prepare for the return of students to campus. These key principles are:



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The graphic is a dark blue rectangle with a white border. At the top, the text 'ACUSD' is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif font. Below it, a horizontal line with a central dot separates the title from the subtitle 'THE 5 PRINCIPLES', also in white, bold, sans-serif font. The five principles are listed in the center in white, all-caps, sans-serif font: EQUITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, INNOVATION, and COLLABORATION. Each principle is accompanied by a white icon: a scale of justice for Equity, a gear with three people for Accountability, a person with a gear for Accessibility, a lightbulb with a lightning bolt for Innovation, and three people in a circle for Collaboration.

Equity: Recognizing and assessing individual students' needs and providing the right resources to meet each student's unique needs and goals

Accountability: Holding ourselves and others to the highest standards while we continuously respond to changing situations throughout the school year

Accessibility: Providing equitable opportunities for students during unprecedented times

Innovation: Taking risks, exploring multiple possibilities, challenging the status quo, and seeking to continually improve processes and outcomes

Collaboration: Strengthening relationships with our students, families, and community by working together to achieve a strong outcome

Starting on Monday, October 19th, we welcomed back our students with the most urgent needs to campuses for in-person instruction. Each school identified who these students are and their families were notified.

This week, we also reviewed the data from the Opt-IN to Distance Learning form that was sent out to all families. With this information and other related data, we will finalize staffing, transportation options, and update families. Please watch for more communication from your child(ren)'s school(s).

During the week of September 28, 2020, Amador County advanced to the Orange Tier of the State's Blueprint for a Safer Economy and we have remained in this tier for the past three weeks. As a result, Amador County has continued to ease restrictions for local businesses. ACUSD is keeping a close and careful eye on our status as we begin the steps to reopen our schools with restrictions to protect the health and safety of our students and staff.





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If Amador County COVID-19 rates change and begin to increase before our reopening date of November 16th, ACUSD may have to remain in distance learning for all. We will always need to be ready to pivot back to distance learning for groups of students, entire campuses, or the entire district, if required by state or county public health officers.



Phased School Reopening

- **Stage 1: Distance Learning (DL)**
- **Stage 2: Limited Student Access (Based on 8/25/2020 CDPH Guidance) [We are here.](#)**
 - DL continues for all students
 - Special Education students, English learners and students far below grade level will return for assessments, services, and instruction in small groups
 - Information will be communicated to these families
- **Stage 3: Hybrid Learning – November 16, 2020**
 - When safe and allowable, pending Amador County Public Health Officer approval
 - Details provided in the Learning Continuity Plan
- **Stage 4: Traditional Schedule with Restrictions**
 - Five days a week on campus instruction
 - Daily sanitizing and social distancing
 - Limits on large gatherings, extracurricular activities and athletics
- **Stage 5: Traditional Schedule with No Restrictions**
 - Five days a week on campus instruction
 - Assemblies, extracurricular activities and athletics
 - Daily health screenings may still be required

I want to stress how important and critical these next steps are for our community and school district. We are moving cautiously and deliberately to make decisions around school health and safety protocols and formalizing plans around health checks and contact tracing, while organizing teacher and staff schedules and working through bargaining agreements.

We still have a long way to go and there is potential for many twists and turns as we maneuver through these uncharted territories. We are moving forward with the Board's direction and with Dr. Kerr's guidance while we continue to keep the health and safety of our students and staff our main priority. All of our upcoming transitions will require our students, staff, and families to adapt and there is no perfect solution at this time.

Through these twists and turns, we thank you for your patience and ask for your continued kindness. Ultimately, it is on all of us to continue social distancing, to wear our face coverings, and to do our part to continue the reduction of community spread which will allow our students to safely remain in the classroom.

Sincerely,
Dr. Amy L. Slavensky
Superintendent of Schools