Information Sheet – 7/16/2020- Board of Trustees Meeting

TO: Board of Trustees Item: 3.1

FR: Jim Bridges

DATE: July 16, 2020

RE: Safe Reopening of Schools 2020/2021

As we moved into July, JSD hoped to send communication that we would be offering families a choice between full-time regular instruction with numerous health/safety precautions and full-time distance learning. However, as I have said from the beginning, we believe schools can only reopen when we can ensure the safety of students, staff, and families.

Unfortunately, over the past month we have been provided incomplete, vague, and contradictory guidance on what it takes to safely reopen schools. In addition, California and San Joaquin County (SJC) specifically have seen skyrocketing infection rates and hospitalizations that make it clear this pandemic is not under control. Currently, SJC has the fifth highest COVID-19 case rate per 100,000 residents.

Month to Month Comparison of COVID-19 Pandemic

	June 16, 2020	July 14, 2020
Total Cases in SJC	1,919	7,216
New Cases per Day * 14 day average	55	328
Rate of Cases Doubling	NA	12 days
Daily Hospitalizations	47	204 20 over capacity 0 beds for children in SJC
Cases for 0-17 age group Cases for 18-49 age group	NA	9.1% 62.6%
CA State Positivity Rate *Goal less than 5%	4.7%	7.7%

Therefore, based upon a recommendation from San Joaquin County Public Health Services and the San Joaquin County Office of Education, I'm recommending that JSD start the year in Distance Learning for all students. Instruction will resume on August 11, 2020, as previously scheduled. The district will continue planning for a return to in-person learning during the 2020-21 academic year, as soon as public health conditions allow. When that becomes possible we will allow parents to make a choice whether to return their students to in-person learning or remain in Distance Learning.

We understand the challenges that our students and families may be facing, but it is very important that we follow the directions given by the health experts. While we are eager to see everyone in person, Jefferson School District has a detailed plan in place to deliver high-quality education to our students while they are learning from home. JSD staff are here to help guide students and families through the uncertainty we are facing over the next several months as we do our part to reduce the spread of the disease.

When the state and county health departments allow for in-person instruction, it is likely that social distancing requirements and other safety protocols will make it impossible for all students to return at the same time. If this is the case, students will attend class in-person two shortened days per week and will engage in distance learning the other three days.

JSD will comply with all California Department of Public Health and San Joaquin County Public Health Services orders when schools reopen. Safety measures may include, but are not limited to, the following: mandatory wearing of masks for staff and/or students, social distancing requirements, limiting access to campus by parents and visitors, daily temperature checks for staff and/or students, restricted movement on campus, modified bell schedules, and elimination of non-essential activities.

Recommended Action:

1. Open in 100% distance learning until San Joaquin County Public Health Services provides data and a recommendation that it is safe to return to in-person instruction.

2. Review the COVID-19 statistics and SJCPHS/SJCOE guidance at the August 18, 2020 Board meeting and if things have improved tremendously consider a hybrid learning model to start sometime in September. Students that want to remain in Distance Learning will continue in that option.

3. Keep reevaluating the data/recommendations at each board meeting until we can open in a hybrid learning model.

UPDATED Safe Reopening of Schools 2020/2021

7/16/2020

Month to Month Comparison of COVID-19 Pandemic

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Updated SJCPHS/SJCOE Guidance

- Strongly recommend that local schools begin the new school year providing only distance learning instruction through at least the end of August, 2020. Based on the direction of districts and schools, staff may report to classrooms or school sites to provide or support distance learning as well as perform other job duties. All necessary physical distancing and safety measures should be implemented for staff that return to campus.
- SJCPHS/SJCOE will review this recommendation in mid-August to determine if the situation has improved enough for schools to begin to offer a modified form of in-person instruction in September.
- Any return to in-person instruction must be guided by the evolving scientific understanding of COVID-19 and the facts of its spread in San Joaquin County. This is why it is important that our school leaders and health experts continue to work together to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and all our communities.

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SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
James A. Mousalimas, County Superintendent of Schools

Distance Learning

Students attend school virtually Monday-Friday on a set time schedule. This would differ greatly from what we experienced in the Spring of 2020. The District learned a lot from the Distance Learning provided at the end of the year. Based upon feedback from staff, parents, and administrators the following changes will be made to Distance Learning.

- ✓ **Take daily attendance**
- ✓ **Provide more direct instruction by classroom teachers**
  - ✓ **Teacher/Peer engagement equivalent to in-school instructional minutes**
  - ✓ **Grade level standards provided at a level of quality to in-person instruction**
- ✓ **Utilize traditional grading**
- ✓ **Require assignments to be turned in more regularly**
- ✓ **Provide printed materials to families**
- ✓ **Loan Chromebooks and Wifi hotspots to families in need**
- ✓ **Provide students access to daily grab and go lunches**

Hybrid Learning Model with Precautions

- **A/B Hybrid Model**
  - ✓ **Students attend school in-person two days a week, virtually two days a week on a Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday schedule.**
  - ✓ **Wednesday would be reserved as a more flexible, virtual check-in day for teachers and students, and/or teacher prep and lesson design. Only staff would be on campus on Wednesdays.**
  - ✓ **This would allow the district to meet the strict social distancing requirements included in state and local health guidance.**
  - ✓ **This means that all JSD students who have not been exempted from in-person attendance under AB 77 section 53503 will engage in a hybrid model of instruction.**
  - ✓ **Families will be given as much advance notice as possible about which days their child is expected to attend school in person. Every effort will be made to assign all siblings in a family to attend school on the same day(s) of the week.**

Traditional Schedule with Precautions

JSD believes that the best place for children to learn is in the classroom connected with caring teachers and staff. As soon as state and local health guidelines permit, we will move to reopen all JSD schools fully.

- **Students return to Traditional Schedule with increased precautions**
  - **Students will return to school Monday-Friday with a normal schedule, but following the San Joaquin County Public Health Services guidelines for reopening schools.**

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 13, 2020
Recommendation from Public Health Officer and Superintendent of Schools
Contacts: Zack Johnson, (209) 468-4937; Carly Sexton, (209) 468-9297

Public Health Officer and Superintendent of Schools Recommend San Joaquin County Schools Start New School Year With 100% Distance Learning

Due to the rise in confirmed cases of COVID-19 and increased hospitalizations in San Joaquin County, San Joaquin County Public Health Officer Dr. Maggie Park and San Joaquin County Superintendent of Schools James Mousalimas strongly recommend that local schools begin the new school year providing only distance learning instruction through at least the end of August, 2020.

Dr. Park and Superintendent Mousalimas released the following joint statement:

Back in March, school districts in San Joaquin County joined those across the state making the difficult decision to close campuses to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus which causes COVID-19.

At first, the efforts to "flatten the curve" showed promising results. But today the numbers show a surge in confirmed COVID-19 cases that has created a situation that is worse than it was on March 13, when San Joaquin County schools were recommended to close. Currently the number of positive COVID-19 cases in San Joaquin County has risen to 6,988, and the ICUs in our seven area hospitals are at 121% capacity. Children younger than 18 years old account for 642 of the positive case count.

Understanding the virus and its local community spread is essential when deciding when and how to reopen schools for the school year. It is for that reason that we are strongly recommending that schools and districts begin the 2020-2021 school year on a 100% distance learning model at least through the end of August. We will review this recommendation in mid-August to determine if the situation has improved enough for schools to begin to offer a modified form of in-person instruction in September. Until then, districts and schools should focus their resources, training, and expertise in providing the best-quality distance learning education possible for all students.

This week, we will also work together to amend the San Joaquin County guidance document for schools: "2020-2021 School Year Planning: A Guide to Address the Challenges of COVID-19."

Education is an essential service in our community, and it remains our firm belief that our children are best served by a return to as much in-person instruction as possible. Beyond the increased educational opportunities that come with being physically in a classroom, children also learn social-emotional skills and receive other supports and benefits from being at school. However, any return to in-person instruction must be guided by the evolving scientific understanding of COVID-19 and the facts of its spread in San Joaquin County. This is why it is important that our school leaders and health experts continue to work together to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and all our communities.

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July 14, 2020

Amendment #1: 2020-2021 School Year Planning: A Guide to Address the Challenges of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the statewide closure of school campuses earlier this year and created an unprecedented challenge to local schools as they continued to provide an education and other services to students and their families in San Joaquin County. After campuses closed on March 16, schools and districts within San Joaquin County moved to a distance learning model.

In order to provide guidance and support to educational leaders preparing to begin the new academic year, the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) and San Joaquin County Public Health Services (SJCPHS) developed a planning document in collaboration with superintendents from San Joaquin County's 14 school districts, that was published on June 17, 2020.

Aligned with recommendations from the California Department of Public Health and approved by the San Joaquin County Public Health Officer, the 2020-2021 School Year Planning: A Guide to Address the Challenges of COVID-19 was based on the best available information about COVID-19 in the county at the time of its development and publication. The guidance in the document was subject to revision as circumstances related to COVID-19 changed.

Understanding the virus and its local community spread is essential when planning for the reopening of schools. In recent weeks, the spread of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 has increased in the country and in California. In San Joaquin County, the number of positive cases and increases in hospitalizations have been a cause of concern. By July 13, the number of positive cases in San Joaquin County had risen to 6,988 and intensive care units in local hospitals were at 121% capacity.

The SJCOE is issuing this July 14, 2020, Guidance Amendment #1 to reflect the recent changes in circumstances. This Guidance Amendment was developed in collaboration with local school leaders and approved by the San Joaquin County Public Health Officer.

The original guidance document published on June 17 states that students may return to school campuses on a five-day-a-week schedule while following safety protocols and other scheduling options providing in-classroom instruction. (Page 8: Instructional Scheduling Options).

<u>However, due to the significant evidence of community spread in San Joaquin County, the SJCOE and SJCPHS are now recommending that local schools begin the new school year providing only distance learning instruction to students through at least the end of August 2020</u>. Based on the direction of districts and schools, staff may report to classrooms or school sites to

provide or support distance learning as well as perform other job duties. All necessary physical distancing and safety measures should be implemented for staff that return to campus.

The SJCOE will review the recommendations in Guidance Amendment #1 with the San Joaquin County Public Health Officer in mid-August to determine if the situation has improved enough for schools to begin to offer a modified form of in-person instruction in September.

James Mousalimas, San Joaquin County Superintendent of Schools, and Dr. Maggie Park, San Joaquin County Public Health Officer, released a joint statement about this recommendation on July 13, 2020.

Education is an essential service in our community, and it remains our firm belief that our children are best served by a return to as much in-person instruction as possible. Beyond the increased educational opportunities that come with being physically in a classroom, children also learn social-emotional skills and receive other supports and benefits from being at school. However, any return to in-person instruction must be guided by the evolving scientific understanding of COVID-19 and the facts of its spread in San Joaquin County. This is why it is important that our school leaders and health experts continue to work together to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and all our communities.