

**PIEDMONT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO:** Board of Education  
**FROM:** Randall Booker, Superintendent  
**DATE:** June 24, 2020  
**RE:** **RECOMMENDATION TO REOPEN PUSD SCHOOLS - FALL 2020**

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**I. SUPPORT INFORMATION**

Piedmont Unified School District closed all schools on March 16, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Distance Learning became the mode of learning for schools in Piedmont and across the nation.

Over the past several weeks, Piedmont Unified has engaged in planning discussions with stakeholders from across the District and county to consider the return to a safe school environment and the reopening of schools on August 11, 2020.

The following memo outlines:

- Superintendent Booker's recommendation for the return to a school environment
  - PUSD Reopening Schools Advisory Taskforce
  - PUSD Health and Safety Task Force
    - Health and Safety Guidelines
      - Guidance provided by the California Department of Education (CDE)
      - Guidance from the California Public Health Department (CAPHD)
      - Guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC)
    - Student Health and Safety Protocols
    - Employee Health and Safety Protocols
  - Staff and Parent Surveys
  - Daily Bell Schedules
  - 2020-2021 Instructional Calendar
  - Grades
  - Decision-making Timeline and Next Steps

### **Recommendation for the Return to a School Environment**

The decision on how to return students and educators to a safe school environment for the 2020-2021 school year is extremely challenging. Any reopening plan must maintain a degree of fluidity as rules and regulations continue to be revised by the California Public Health Department. What is recommended on June 24, 2020, may need to shift, both as we approach August, and throughout the school year due to changing conditions and the impact of COVID-19 in Alameda County and the City of Piedmont.

There are a multitude of decisions in front of the Board of Education, District and site administration, educators, families, and students, all related to how we might return students and educators to their classrooms in August. In order to appropriately address each decision and corresponding detail, I am recommending that we make decisions over several Special Board of Education Meetings. Each decision point will allow for public comment and the District to focus its resources and proceed as efficiently as possible.

During the June 24, 2020 Board of Education Meeting, I am asking the Board of Education to review and discuss my recommendation that Piedmont Unified students and educators return to campuses under a Blended Learning Model, rather than beginning the year under a Full Distance Learning Model. A Blended Learning Model is a weekly combination of In-Person and Online Synchronous, and Asynchronous Lessons (synchronous learning is online or distance education that happens in real time, whereas asynchronous learning occurs through online channels without real-time interaction). In other words, students would return to their respective campus for in-person instruction a few days per week and participate in online learning (a combination of synchronous and asynchronous) for the remainder of the week.

It is clear, due to social distancing guidelines published by the CDC and the CA Dept. of Public Health, and the Alameda County Dept. of Public Health that we are only permitted to have students on campuses where we can provide for 6' of social distancing (especially in the classroom setting). This would result in only half of the students on campus at any one time, eliminating the opportunity for 100% in-person learning.

A Blended Learning Model is dependent on the District's ability to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission and adhere to the Center for Disease Control and the California Department of Public Health's guidance for the health and safety of students and educators. This includes social distancing protocols, proper hygiene - hand washing, PPE (e.g. masks worn at all times by all adults and

students on campus), screening, and the sanitization and cleaning of our facilities (as prescribed by the Center for Disease Control).

A Blended Learning Model, paired with appropriate health and safety protocols, best addresses the District's goals toward relevant and outstanding educational learning experiences and the social/emotional health of our students and educators by providing both in-person and Online Synchronous and Asynchronous community-building and instruction.

### **PUSD Reopening Schools Advisory Taskforce**

During the June 10, 2020 Board of Education Meeting, district staff presented on the progress of the PUSD Reopening Schools Advisory Taskforce ([Board Background](#), [Presentation](#)).

The PUSD Reopening Schools Advisory Taskforce served as an advisory group to the Superintendent and School Board. The Taskforce was widely represented with 105 members from the following stakeholder groups: high school students (11), parents (20), classified staff (13), certificated staff (46), site and district administration (13), school board (2).

The responsibilities of the members were as follows:

- Develop a “blueprint for the Learning Landscape for 2020-21” considering the range of issues and complexities on topics such as: health and safety, equity, instruction, assessment/grading, special education, student support services;
- Work collaboratively to reach consensus when possible on multiple scenarios to recommend to the School Board for reopening schools at each level;
- Develop a plan to provide full distance learning in preparation for a surge of the virus resulting in another shelter-in-place, and for students whose families may decide on behalf of their children not to return to school until a vaccine is developed.

### **Scenarios and Prototypes of Elementary and Secondary Schedules**

The following graphic illustrates learning models discussed during the taskforce meetings. These models range from full distance learning to the full return to school when there is an effective vaccine. Taskforce members discussed the scenarios before reviewing prototypes of schedules.

DISTANCE LEARNING	FIXED STABLE COHORT	ROTATING TEACHER (RT) COHORT	100% IN-PERSON PRIORITIZED	SOCIAL DISTANCED 50%? CAPACITY	"REGULAR" SCHOOL (EFFECTIVE VACCINE)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIP and ACPH orders</li> <li>• In response to cases in school or cohort</li> <li>• A chosen delivery model</li> <li>• Any closures lasting more than 3 days</li> <li>• <i>Different accountability model than Spring 2020</i></li> <li>• <i>Mix of synchronous and asynchronous</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 students or less</li> <li>• 6 ft apart</li> <li>• Masks/ hand-washing</li> <li>• Screening mechanism</li> <li>• 1 room per day</li> <li>• <b>1 teacher per day</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 students or less</li> <li>• 6 ft apart</li> <li>• Masks/ hand-washing</li> <li>• Screening mechanism</li> <li>• 1 room per day</li> <li>• <b>Teachers rotate to different rooms</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children of essential workers/staff</li> <li>• Prioritized students (special ed?, k-1?, at-risk, other?)</li> <li>• 15 students or less</li> <li>• 6 ft apart</li> <li>• Masks/ hand-washing</li> <li>• Screening mechanism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 students or less</li> <li>• 6 ft apart</li> <li>• Masks/ hand-washing</li> <li>• Screening mechanism</li> <li>• <b>Students disperse to different rooms based on schedule</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No social distancing</li> <li>• Previous operations</li> </ul>

Several prototypes were reviewed by the Taskforce members in order to generate discussion on the feasibility and effectiveness at different school levels.

I am extremely proud of the collaborative spirit and robust discussions of the taskforce. Their discussion notes, questions, and considerations have all influenced my recommendation for a Blended Learning Model. While the taskforce was ultimately unable to fully develop a plan on specific learning models for both the elementary and secondary campuses, their progress will serve as the foundation for discussions as representatives from the Association of Piedmont Teachers and PUSD Administration continue to meet to develop and recommend specific daily bell schedules under a Blended Learning Model. These will be brought forth for consideration by the PUSD Board of Education (see Bell Schedule Committee on page 10).

**PUSD Health and Safety Task Force**

The PUSD Health and Safety Task Force continues to meet in order to develop Board Policy 0470 - COVID-19 Mitigation Plan. This Board policy will provide District’s expectations on the following topics:

1. Social Distancing Requirements
2. Personal Protection Equipment and Hygiene Practices
3. Sanitization of Facilities and Equipment
4. Student Absence and Attendance

## 5. Health Screening of Students and Staff

Members of the PUSD Health and Safety Task Force include: Randall Booker - Superintendent; Ruth Alahydroian - Chief Financial Officer; Hillary Crissinger - Director of Students Services and Special Education; Dr. Sarah Pearson - PUSD Board Member; Andrea Swenson - PUSD Board Member; Dr. Jim Crawford-Jakubiak; Carol Menz - District Nurse; Amy Jo Goldfarb - District Nurse; Pete Palmer - Director of Facilities; Michael Brady - Bond Program Manager; Kim Randlett - Classified Human Resources; Suzanne Binder - Certificated Human Resources; and Jennifer Stahl, Administrative Assistant to the Chief Financial Officer.

As discussions have progressed, I am making the following recommendations in relation to the adoption of a Blended Learning Model:

### 1. Social Distancing Requirements

In order to maintain a campus environment that allows for social distancing, the District will assess the capacity of school facilities, including classrooms, student center, multi-purpose rooms, gyms, and outdoor areas, and determine the means by which the facilities can best be utilized considering space and time alternatives.

To the extent reasonably possible, the district will:

1. Within classrooms, space desks at least six feet apart and position them in a way that limits students facing each other;
2. Stagger students in areas of high traffic, such as when students are using lockers, lining up for class, or passing between classes;
3. Mark six-foot boundaries within classrooms, common areas, outdoor spaces, and places where students are likely to gather so that students and staff are more readily aware of and can more easily abide by social distancing requirements;
4. Utilize restroom stalls and sinks in a manner that allows for social distancing, such as limiting the number of students and/or staff who may use the restroom at a time, blocking off every other stall or sink from use, and/or marking six-foot boundaries;
5. Minimize the mixing of students from different classrooms in common spaces, such as in cafeterias and libraries;
6. Conduct recess and physical education classes in a manner that allows for social distancing and minimizes the use of physical education equipment;
7. Determine specific entrances and exits at each campus for student classes/cohorts to minimize large gatherings at the beginning and end of the school day.

Large gatherings, such as assemblies, rallies, and field trips will be suspended

until the Board determines, consistent with guidance from state and local health officials, that it is safe to resume such activities.

Determination on the continuance of middle school and high school athletics will be made in conjunction with guidance from the [California Interscholastic Federation](#) and the North Coast Section at a subsequent Board of Education Meeting.

## 2. Personal Protection Equipment and Hygiene Practices

On June 18, 2020, Governor Newsom and the CA Public Health Department published an updated [Guidance for Face Coverings](#). It mandates that face coverings be worn state-wide in the circumstances and with the exceptions outlined therein. It does not substitute for existing guidance about social distancing and handwashing.

I recommend that all employees and all students be required to wear face coverings while on PUSD campuses. The District will provide PPE to students and staff who do not bring their own personal PPE. Students and staff will also be provided instruction in the proper use, removal, disposal, and cleaning of PPE. PUSD has already secured an ample supply of KN95 masks for staff and non surgical masks for students. Additionally, the CA Department of Education will supply districts across the state with face coverings, face shields (for staff), and hand sanitizer.

Face coverings will not be required for anyone who has trouble breathing or is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance. Reasonable accommodations will be made for anyone who is unable to wear a face covering for medical reasons.

The District has secured disposable gloves and is in the process of securing PPE gowns for staff (if they so choose).

The district will instruct and encourage students and staff to practice good hygiene, such as appropriate covering of coughs and sneezes and regular hand washing of at least 20 seconds, including before eating and after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing.

Site administrators will coordinate with the Director of Facilities, District Nurses, and site personnel to provide adequate time and opportunity for students to wash hands, and will make hand sanitizer available in every classroom and meeting space and in areas where handwashing is less accessible. Signage regarding healthy hygiene practices and how to stop the spread of COVID-19 will be posted in and around school facilities.

## 3. Sanitization of Facilities and Equipment

School facilities and shared equipment such as desks, tables, sports/playground equipment, computers, door handles, light switches, and other frequently used equipment and supplies will be cleaned and disinfected at least daily with appropriate cleaning agents (EPA List N approved).

All PUSD Custodial staff have successfully completed the Spartan CleanCheck ISSA/CITS certification program for pandemic cleaning, classroom cleaning, hard floor care, and carpet care.

PUSD Custodians will utilize [Victory Electrostatic Sprayers](#) as part of their cleaning regiment to quickly and efficiently disinfect all elementary classrooms and meeting spaces prior to the next cohort of students arriving. This method of cleaning allows our custodians to disinfect (using an EPA list N approved PurTab disinfectant) an entire classroom in a matter of minutes. Electrostatic Sprayers are employed across the country in schools, airlines, and public transportation.

Electrostatic Sprayers will also be employed at the secondary campuses each evening. Throughout the day secondary students will wipe down their desks at the end of each period prior to the next cohort of students arriving. Site administrators will coordinate with the Director of Facilities, District Nurses, and site personnel to ensure that paper towels used for wiping down desks are safely disposed.

During the summer, all ventilation systems will have been upgraded with CDC recommended MERV-13 filters to support a higher level of air filtration throughout the school day. Classroom economizers can be operated and adjusted remotely and will be set on maximum each day, ensuring that at least 15 cubic feet per minute (cfm) of outside air be provided for each occupant.

Site administrators will coordinate with the Director of Facilities, site personnel, and the City of Piedmont to designate outdoor classroom spaces (weather permitting) for each class. The use of this space is at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

I recommend that all outdoor/indoor drinking fountains be deemed inoperable to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Students and staff are encouraged to bring their own water bottle for personal use throughout the day.

#### 4. Student Absence and Attendance

Recognizing that COVID-19 will continue to impact the attendance of students following the reopening of school campuses, District and site administrators will notify students and parents/guardians of the expectations regarding school attendance. Such notification will direct any student who contracts the virus or lives with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home in accordance with state and local health directives so as to curtail the spread of COVID-19.

Students who are infected with COVID-19 will be excluded from on-campus instruction until a medical provider states in writing that the student is no longer contagious. (Education Code 49451; Health and Safety Code 120230; 5 CCR 202)

Students who are identified as being in a high-risk population for serious complications from COVID-19 because of a medical condition may request assessment and accommodations under Section 504 and/or an alternative instructional method that allows the student to continue receiving instruction off campus.

If a student would otherwise be required to attend on-campus instruction but is kept home by the parents/guardians due to concerns for the welfare of their child, the principal will work with the student and parent/guardian to find alternative means of instruction, which may include distance or blended learning, independent study, printed class assignments, or other reasonable means.

#### 5. Health Screening of Students and Staff

Each day, prior to arrival on campuses, all students and staff will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms utilizing an at-home online survey of questions (as recommended by the CDC). Questions may include, but are not at this time limited to:

*By answering “yes” to any of the following questions, the respective staff member or student is not permitted on campuses.*

1. *Since your last day of work, or last visit here, have you had any of these symptoms that is not attributable to another condition?*
  - *Cough*
  - *Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing*
  - *Or at least two of these symptoms*
    - *Fever (100.4° F/37.8° C or greater as measured by an oral thermometer)*
    - *Chills*
    - *Repeated shaking with chills*
    - *Congestion or runny nose*
    - *Nausea or vomiting*
    - *Muscle pain*
    - *Headache*
    - *Sore throat*
    - *New loss of taste or smell*
2. *In the past 14 days, have you been in close proximity to anyone who was experiencing any of the above symptoms or has experienced any of the above symptoms since your contact?*
3. *In the past 14 days, have you been in close proximity to anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19?*



4. *Have you been tested for COVID-19 and are waiting to receive test results?*
5. *Have you tested positive for COVID-19, or are you presumptively positive for COVID-19 based on your health care provider's assessment or your symptoms?*
6. *In the past 14 days, have you been on a commercial flight or traveled outside of the United States?*
7. *In the past 14 days, have you been in close proximity to anyone who has been on a commercial flight or traveled outside of the United States?*

If the screening indicates a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms, or if the student exhibits symptoms at any time during the school day, the student will be placed in a supervised isolation area until the student's parent/guardian is contacted and the student can be transported home or to a healthcare facility.

### **Staff/Parent Surveys**

On Friday, June 19, 2020, PUSD administered surveys for parents and staff members to collect data on both family and staff comfort and intentions with a return to campuses under a Blended Learning Model vs. a Full Distance Learning Model. The results will be shared at the June 24th Board of Education Meeting.

The surveys can be accessed here:

[Survey of Families - 2020-2021 School Year](#)

[Survey of Staff - 2020-2021 School Year](#)

### **Calendar Committee**

Found in the collective bargaining agreement between the district, the Association of Piedmont Teachers, and the California School Employees Association, the Calendar Committee has operated over the years to discuss and develop annual instructional calendars for district operations. Linked are the current instructional calendars for [20-21](#) and [21-22](#).

Through negotiations during the 19-20 school year, and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district and all bargaining teams have agreed to adding three (3) additional professional learning days to the 20-21 instructional calendar to address professional learning and collaborative planning for distance learning and in-person instruction.

The calendar committee will convene, develop, and recommend a revised 2020-2021 instructional calendar that incorporates the three additional

professional learning days. It is anticipated that the first day of school will be pushed back and occur after the originally planned August 11, 2020 start date.

I recommend that the Calendar Committee provide its recommendations for consideration at the June 29, 2020 Special Board of Education Meeting.

### **Bell Schedule Committee**

The Reopening Schools Advisory Task Force began to discuss and develop possible daily bell schedules for the return to school in the fall. Their progress will serve as the foundation for discussions as representatives from the Association of Piedmont Teachers and the PUSD Administration (Bell Schedule Committee) continue to meet to develop and recommend specific daily bell schedules under a Blended Learning Model for consideration by the PUSD Board of Education.

Found in the collective bargaining agreement between the District and the Association of Piedmont Teachers, the Bell Schedule Committee has operated over the years to discuss and develop daily bell schedules that best support student learning and take into consideration a variety of site-based issues (prep time, staff collaboration, tutorial, etc.).

The Bell Schedule Committee will convene, develop, and recommend daily bell schedules in response to the COVID-19 learning landscape and ultimately, the Board's decision regarding a Blended Learning Model or a Full Distance Learning Model. The recommended schedules will serve to best meet the guidelines of the public health department and address our goals of relevant and outstanding educational learning experiences and the social/emotional health of our students and educators.

I recommend that the Bell Schedule Committee provide its recommendations for consideration at the July 2, 2020 Special Board of Education Meeting.

### **Grades**

Under either a Blended Learning Model or Distance Learning Model of instruction, I recommend that school sites and educators return to a system of assessments and grading as was prescribed prior to the closing of schools in March of 2020. Board Policy [5121](#) supports academic letter grades and authorizes the calculation of median grade point averages using a letter grading system.

**Decision-making Timeline and Next Steps**

June 24, 2020 Board of Education Meeting

- 1st Reading of Recommended Blended Learning Model - **No Action**

June 29, 2020 Special Board of Education Meeting

- 2nd Reading and Decision of the Recommended Blended Learning Model - **Action Requested**
- 1st Reading of Calendar Committee Recommendation for Revised 20-21 Instructional Calendar - **No Action**

July 2, 2020 Special Board of Education Meeting

- 2nd Reading and Decision of Calendar Committee Recommendation for Revised 20-21 Instructional Calendar - **Action Requested**
- 1st Reading of Bell Schedule Committee Recommendation for Elementary and Secondary Daily Bell Schedules - **No Action**
- 1st Reading of Board Policy 0470 - Covid-19 Mitigation Plan - **No Action**

July 7, 2020 Special Board of Education Meeting

- 2nd Reading of Bell Schedule Committee Recommendation for Elementary and Secondary Daily Bell Schedules - **Action Requested**
- 2nd Reading of Board Policy 0470 - Covid-19 Mitigation Plan - **Action Requested**

II. **RECOMMENDATION: REVIEW AND ACTION**

Review and discuss the superintendent's recommendation to adopt a Blended Learning Model of instruction for the 2020-2021 school year. No action is required at the June 24, 2020 Board of Education Meeting.