VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
March 23, 2021
UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Call to Order

In accordance with Governor Newsom's executive orders of social distancing due to the COVID-19, the Regular Board of Education meeting was held on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, as a teleconference/video conference meeting where one or more members participated. The public had the opportunity to submit their public comment via the public comments email address or live via the Zoom platform. The public streaming of the Regular Board meeting was made available through the Ventura Adult and Continuation Education, TDC Studios YouTube Channel. Those in attendance were:

Board President	Ms. Velma Lomax
Board Vice President	Mr. Matt Almaraz
Board Member	Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez
Board Member	Ms. Amy Callahan
Board Member	Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Superintendent	Dr. Roger Rice
Asst. Supt. /Certificated HR	Dr. Jeff Davis
Asst. Supt. /Bus. Services	Ms. Rebecca Chandler
General Counsel	Mr. Anthony Ramos

Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the agenda as amended, adding a Roll Call vote to item # 17a.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

Public Comment on Closed Session Items

None.

Motion to go to Closed Session

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to go to closed session at 5:31 p.m.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

REGULAR SESSION - Ron Halt Classroom - 7:00 p.m.

At 7:00 p.m., Board President Velma Lomax called the Regular Meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Report of Actions Taken in Closed Session

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the recommendation for Public Employment/ Appointment of Mr. Mark Asher as the new Principal of Lincoln Elementary.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice introduced the newly appointed Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Dr. Antonio Castro. Dr. Castro took a moment to thank the Board and Dr. Rice and expressed his excitement for joining the VUSD Team.

Dr. Rice invited Dr. Lorelle Dawes, Principal at Cabrillo Middle School and Chapter President of Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) for the North Ventura Chapter, to help present a very special employee recognition. Dr. Dawes presented an Administrator of the Year Award called "Leadership Matters", which is given to someone who makes a difference for students, schools, and school districts. This year, the award goes to Ms. Gina Wolowicz, Director of Elementary Curriculum and instruction, and Dr. Greg Bayless, Director of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction. for doing a phenomenal job of holding down the fort in Ed Services while we have been searching for a new Assistant Superintendent.

Dr. Rice then introduced Dr. Rene Rickard, Chief Innovation Officer, to give an update on the *VUSD Got Skills-Let's Share Them* Contest. Dr. Rickard shared that over 60-20 second videos were summitted, four of which were shared during the board meeting and can be found at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6evDuIRFD_tQVKG6mQiiJA. Dr. Rice then announced the winners of the Superintendent's Award, Ms. Adithi Desham and Ms. Hannah Dearman-So from Foothill Technology High School.

Dr. Rice gave a shout out to Lindsay Smith who received the School Counselor of the Quarter Award.

Dr. Rice shared that the Healthy at School Committee, Partnership for a Healthy Ventura County, selected Ventura County Child Nutrition Directors and Staff as the recipients of the 2020 Health Champion Award. They were chosen for their extraordinary work to make our community healthier. Dr. Rice congratulated Ms. Kara Muniz, VUSD's Director of Food and Nutritious Services, and Staff for their exceptional work.

Student Board Member Ms. Violet Delgado representing Buena High School, Ms. Frances Kayser representing Ventura High School and Ms. Christine Davis representing VACE, shared a brief update on the exciting things happening at their school sites.

Correspondence

None.

Public Comments

The following individuals gave a public comment via e-mail or live via Zoom* regarding: reopening all schools to fulltime in-person instruction; to approve three feet social distancing in the classrooms; to provide additional staffing in all kindergarten and first grade classes due to increased behaviors; to ask why negotiations were not done sooner; to return to a gradual Hybrid Model in secondary; to choose an A/B Model in secondary with no Zoom classes; concerns about changes in small groups once students come back full -time; concerns over 85 minute class periods in high school due to the fact students have been on distance learning for so long; requesting a comparison between the TWI programs in VUSD and requesting a special education resource comparison across all VUSD schools; concerns with bussing for secondary students; questions about the start time for secondary schools; the importance of music programs; to be more transparent regarding the return to school; to bring back moderate/severed special education students to fulltime learning immediately and to have a six week ESY program:

Deanna Gray	Krista Kessler	Rafael Gonzalez	Sulin Rubalcava
Laura Kaylor	Ellen Laber	Smantha Oerlemans	Lisa Bondy
Kate Shanahan	Michelle Davidson	Jeana Van	Amy Stolworthy
Melissa Sapp	Dariann & Nick Kobe	Andi & Ed Kish	Heather Austin
Keely Henkel	Joan Bennett	Joel Bennett	Tony Plezakowski
Melyssa Noren	Julie Heidrick	Marisa Murphy	Emma Bograd
Teresa Hayes	Bonnie Galindo	Kristy Lim	Loren & Christoph Haar

Tiffany Barnhart	Annette Taylor	Cadence Oerlemans	Elizabeth England
Lacie Tarrant	Kelly Herrera	Sheila Murphy	Jackie Meyer
Jamie King	Elizabeth Walker Martinez	Stefanie Hathaway	Heather Miyata
Sara Gray	Lisa Clement	Marisa Brown	Cyndi Gilbert
Hani Geske	Megan Andreasen	Stephanie Coombs	Darcie Keller
Antoinette Perez	Carrie Campbell	Chris Anderson	Kevin Downey
Dan Nelson*	Timur Taluy*	Ellen Laber*	Su-Lin Rubalcava*
Sarah Clancy*	Lacey Swensen*	Emma Bograd*	Ashley Pope*
Marisa Brown*	Anette Walters*	Lauren Taluy*	Darcy Duffy*
Carrie Campbell*	Kevin Downey*	Cadence Oerlemans*	

CONFERENCE - SUPERINTENDENT

14.a **School Reopening Update**

Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice, gave an update on School Reopening and emphasized what has changed since the last board meeting on March 9, 2021. Dr. Rice shared the Blueprint Metrics that was released today from Ventura County Public Health for the week ending March 13, 2021. The data continues to show a decline in both case rate, now at 5.0 down from 6.5, and a positivity rate of 2.2%, down from 2.8%.

Dr. Rice gave a quick overview of AB 86 that was discussed at length during the March 9, 2021 board meeting, reiterating that the new law requires educational agencies to offer in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible. Dr. Rice briefly reviewed the Key Provisions of AB 86 and the funding provided by AB 86 which is estimated to be 15 million.

Dr. Rice provided information about a current lawsuit happening in San Diego, A.A. et. al. v. Newsom, and shared that this lawsuit does not invalidate collective bargaining requirements or existing MOU's.

Dr. Rice shared that physical distancing has been one of the main hurdles that we have faced trying to get the students back to in-person learning, especially in secondary. Recently the Center for Disease Control (CDC), The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Ventura County Public Health (VCPH) and the World Health Organization (WHO), has recommended the minimum distance of three feet of social distancing is safe. The CAL/OSHA does still require six feet between teacher desks and students desks.

Dr. Rice shared Co-Curricular Activities that are now allowed with proper safety mitigation efforts in place. They include: athletics, cheer, marching band, choral music, wind instruments, dance and small group supports.

Dr. Rice shared information surrounding end of the year activities. Currently, City Hall has been reserved to do a similar drive through graduation as last year. However with improvements we are seeing in our County, sites and the district support team are currently working together to review potential on-site programs with live streaming capabilities. VCOE is coordinating sub committees to submit design plans to VCPH for review and approval.

Next steps for VUSD include collective bargaining, completing the furniture replacements and accommodating schedule requests as often as possible. Dr. Rice announced that all VUSD schools will return to full time daily instruction for all students at all grades for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year but emphasized that COVID driven change is always possible.

CONFERENCE - EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

15.a Student *Cameras On* Campaign Update

Ms. Marissa Cervantes, Principal of DATA Middle School, presented on the *Cameras On* Campaign that began on February 26, 2021 to help build community, support academic achievement and create a safe learning environment while on Distance Learning. The task force is made up administrators, teachers, support staff, students and parents working together to promote students having their

cameras-on during appropriate instructional times, with a goal of increasing student engagement. Ms. Cervantes shared that there is currently a high rate of D's/F's in secondary and between 95-100% of students have screens off during live instructional times. Student engagement is also low and there are concerns for student safety with non-responsive students.

Ms. Cervantes shared that the Task Force is working on a plan for when students should have their cameras on and times when students could have their cameras off. Cameras-on would be required for: live teacher instructional time; class discussions; peer presentations; break-out rooms; and tests/quizzes. Cameras-off would be allowed for: independent work; watching a video; restroom break; special circumstances; tests/quizzes as appropriate. The task force is hoping to begin implementation for the fourth quarter. The task Force believes that students having their cameras on will: increase student engagement; positively impact student academic progress; promote school/class community; create student accountability; provide teachers immediate feedback in adjusting instructional lessons; increase teacher checking for for understanding; allow teachers to know their students; celebrate diversity; make it as normal as possible during these unprecedented times; students will influence students and to increase parent awareness.

Ms. Cervantes acknowledged that the task force is aware that there are some reasons that students do not feel comfortable turning on their cameras such as students who experience anxiety or other mental health concerns, and is considering an "opt-out" form that parents could complete. Another reason could be that students do not have access to Wi-Fi, and the need to make sure students get access to Wi- Fi hotspots. Students also may not have a desk/chair at home to work at and the committee will be working to provide these if needed. Lastly, all students come from a variety of circumstances and may not feel comfortable showing the background in their home. The committee proposed a SEL project where students would be supplied the necessary tools to make their own unique backgrounds.

15.b Mental Health and Wellness Presentation

Ms. Cynthia Frutos, Director of Student Support Services, gave an update on Mental Health Services. Ms. Frutos shared the components of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports for social emotional, behavior and mental health services which includes tiered interventions, school and community collaboration, professional development, curriculum design, and positive behavior intervention and support.

Ms. Frutos shared that the mental health framework consists of guiding principals for all students and a three tiered system of support. Tier 1 supports are for all students and include social-emotional learning, positive school climate, bullying and suicide prevention and school counselors to name a few. Tier 2 supports are for "some" students which include: screening, referrals, outreach and school counselor supports. Tier 3 supports are for a "few" students and include individual mental health counseling, wrap around services and community based mental health services.

Ms. Cynthia Burns, Assistant Director of Student Support Services, and Cassandra Hopkins, Elementary School SAP Counselor, shared information on the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model. The ASCA National Model guides school counselors in the development of school counseling programs that are based on data-informed decision making, delivered to all students systemically, include a developmentally appropriate curriculum focused on the mindsets and behaviors all students need for success and result in improved student achievement, attendance and discipline.

Ms. Burns shared parent and family engagement opportunities that VUSD has provided. These include bully prevention, affinity groups, social-emotional learning, mental health fairs and school events.

Mr. Peter Aguirre, School Psychologist, shared information on the Instruction, Behavior and Inclusion (IBI) Team. The IBI Team consists of a Board Certified Behavior Analysist, a Behavior Specialist, and IBI Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) and Behavior Support Assistants which offer a variety of supports including: behavior intervention plan consultant and intervention; functional behavior assessment consultation and development; data collection; team consultation regarding behavioral concerns; professional development trainings; trainings on the implementation of intervention plans and the COVID-19 Task Force.

Mental Health Resources can be found on the VUSD website at https://www.venturausd.org/Fall2020/MentalHealth.aspx

15.c Request to delay Ethnic & Social Justice Studies (ESJS) High School graduation requirement by one year due to Covid

Dr. Soledad Molinar, Director of Multilingual and Multicultural Programs, presented a resolution to request the postponement of the implementation of the Ethnic and Social Justice Studies (ESJS) Graduation requirement by one year due to COVID. The Board originally passed the resolution to include 10 units of a designated UC/A-G approved Ethnic and Social Justice course starting with the graduating class of 2025.

Dr. Molinar shared VUSD's progress towards the graduation requirement which include:

- Implemented a year long UC/A-G ESJS elective course.
- Provided professional development at the elementary and secondary levels for early adopters on the ESJS tenets, themes, social justice standards, courageous conversations and Let's Talk protocols.
- Continued district-wide professional development (PD) on implicit bias.
- Solicited high school teachers to be part of the first Integration Team to participate in PD and collaborative planning on integrating ESJS into the current high school courses. Developed a
- partnership with the Ventura County Office of Education to provide PD for all elementary and middle school teachers on culturally responsive teaching and panels of local experts representing four marginalized groups noted by the CDE: African American, Asian American, Chicana/o/x Latina/o/x and Native American Studies.

CONFERENCE - BUSINESS SERVICES

16.a Quick Base, Inc. & Advantage Integrated Solutions, Inc. Agreements 2020-21 (Action Requested)

Dr. Rene Rickard, Chief Innovation Officer, presented on a form and data management program by Advantage Integrated Solutions Form Engine and QuickBase. This data management system will modernize processes and protocols, help eliminate errors caused by manual data entry, reduce paper and printing costs and increase overall efficiency across all divisions. The annual cost is $4,000 per year for Advantage Integrated Solutions (form engine) and $6,000 per year for QuickBase (database).

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the contract with Quick Base, Inc. and Advantage Integrated Solutions, Inc.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

ACTION ITEMS

17.a Ratification of Contract Approval of Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the ratification of employment contract for the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Dr. Antonio Castro, beginning April 5, 2021.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve consent items #'s 18 - 22 as presented.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: Ms. Amy Callahan.

CONSENT- EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

18.a Approval of 2020-2021 District Industry Advisory Board members

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated

19.a Ratification of Administration's Approval of Resignations, Retirements and Release for Certificated Personnel for the 2020-21 School Year

19.b Ratification of Administration's Approval for Leave of Absence for Certificated Personnel for the 2020-21 School Year

19.c Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Substitute

19.d Ratification of Administration's Approval of Miscellaneous & Part-Time Certificated Assignments for the 2020-21 School Year

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Classified

20.a Classified Position Changes

20.b Classified Personnel Changes

CONSENT - BUSINESS SERVICES

21.a Ratification of Change Order #1, C10-21 Ventura High School Cabling Project

21.b Ratification of Final Settlement Agreement and Release of All Claims No. MD202101

21.c Gifts to School District

21.d Ratification of Purchase Orders (February 24, 2021 to March 9, 2021)

CONSENT - SUPERINTENDENT

22.a Consideration of Board Meeting Minutes

BOARD REPORTS

None.

COMING EVENTS

- LCAP Advisory Committee Meeting, March 24 at 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
- Groundbreaking Ceremony at Sa'Aliyahs Ranch, March 25 at 3:00 p.m.
- DELAC Meeting, March 25 at 6:30 p.m.
- Board Holiday April 2 - District Closed
- Spring Break: April 5 - April 9, No School
- Parent Advisory Committee Meeting: April 13th at 9:00 a.m.
- Classified School Employees of the Year-Call for Nominations: Due by April 1st

FUTURE BOARD ITEMS

- Student Learning Loss/Acceleration - April
- Board Policies Update - April
- Human Resources Update - May
- Fall Reopening Update - TBD

- Facilities Update - July

BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS - (No official action will be taken)

Trustee Sabrena Rodriguez shared that on the consent items there is a list of the Industry Advisory Board Members and it is absolutely incredible. She stated that there is such an array of community members who are volunteering their time. Secondly, Ms. Rodriguez recognized the list of very talented people who will be retiring this year, stating they deserve recognition and thanks for their many years of service.

Trustee Matt Almaraz shared that we currently have some tremendous temporary teachers working at our school sites and encouraged parents to let their site principals know what a fantastic job they are doing. Mr. Almaraz shared that he recently lost his grandfather, Mr. Cecil Preciado, at the age of 92. Lastly, Mr. Almaraz gave condolences regarding the recent tragedy in Colorado and sends his prayers to the families and everyone involved.

Dr. Rice gave thanks to everyone for hanging in there for this late meeting and thanked all VUSD staff who work so hard to bring about good programs for our students.

CLOSED SESSION

There was no need to return to closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to adjourn the meeting at 11:13 p.m. to the next Regular Board Meeting to be held at 7:00 p.m. on April 13, 2021.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

APPROVED _____President

_____Secretary

[redacted]

From: Deanna Gray <deannagray22@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 4:34 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment for 3/23 board meeting

Dear Dr. Rice and VUSD School Board,

I am a parent to three children-they are currently in 3rd, 6th and 8th grade respectively. I am writing to let you know that our family fully supports a full reopening of schools for K-12 as soon as possible. We appreciate the hard work that goes into planning for the many logistics and understand how challenging this task is. With the new guidance of 3 feet social distancing, the financial support being received for reopening, and the clear science supporting the low-risk of Covid-19 transmission in school settings, we feel it is the right time to advocate for a full reopening. Students need to be in school and the benefits of their return far outweigh the risks at this time. We hope that you feel supported by the families you serve, in what is likely a difficult decision with the union and teachers; and keep your focus on the road ahead and what is right for our children: a full reopening of K-12.

Deanna Gray

[redacted]

From: Krista Kessler <kristamkessler@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 5:21 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Reopen

Dear Trustees,

Please proceed with full-time reopening for elementary. I've commented before but I'm a single parent still working long hours as a lawyer. My kids are increasingly struggling & losing interest in school. They need to go back now. Thank you for all you do.

Krista Kessler

[redacted]

From: Gonzalez, Rafael <RGonzalez@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 5:23 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: Rice, Roger
Subject: RE: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Request for Live Public Comment - March 23, 2021 meeting

Mr. Rice and Ms. Dahm,

Please include the following public comment in the record for tomorrow's hearing. Thank you all for your serious consideration of this difficult issue.

I am a parent of a high school and two middle school children in our District. My wife and I have always taken an active role in our kids' public school education and have been very supportive of our local schools and our teachers.

Over this past year, we have been patient and supportive of decisions made based on best data available and the science when assessing the health and safety of our teachers and kids. It was this data and guidance by the CDC and others that we all relied on when shutting down our schools and going to online learning. Again – we were supportive in those efforts based on the best data available.

As our situation is thankfully improving and as the formal safety guidance is revised both at the state and federal level to allow us to reopen our schools, there seems to be new pushback by some teachers and others – but this time arguing against the same formal public health guidelines they previously cited and that we have all relied on during this past year.

As a parent, it is difficult for me to understand how some in our educational community are now arguing against following the same guidelines from the CDC and that state that we all applied to justify closing down our schools. It makes no reasonable sense that the same institutions that we have come to rely on for health and safety guidance are now somehow not good enough as we try to get our kids back to school.

The fact is that three (3) feet separation versus four (4) feet can make a massive practical difference in allowing our schools to resume full-time in-person learning given our classroom size constraints and the number of students in our classes. This was no doubt a consideration by the CDC and the California Department of Public Health when issuing their 3-feet guidelines as a safe distance for our kids and teachers – especially when taking other mitigation efforts. On the other hand, there is no scientific support for the minimum four feet requirement or the six feet being proposed by some. The practical

result of those positions is to effectively deny our kids the ability to return to in-person school on a full-time basis.

While much has been legitimately made about the difficulty teachers will face when going back to school, these are the same difficulties many parents have been facing all along while keeping their private and public sector jobs and homeschooling their kids. Believe me - we all get it. It is going to be difficult and new. But I have no doubt that our teachers will rise to the occasion and teach our kids.

We have seen many teachers step up in remarkable ways this past year. Unfortunately, we have also witnessed some teachers unable to adapt to online teaching (much like many of the kids they can't teach). Some teachers have relied on playing books on tape for 12 weeks straight or simply asking our children to sign on to Zoom to check in for two minutes. Even those teachers who are going the extra mile to teach our kids will admit the term "online learning" can sometimes be an oxymoron. While some kids do well, the majority of kids struggle.

The teachers are the first to tell us that this experiment of online learning doesn't work and it's setting our kids back academically and emotionally. The lasting impacts on our kids are not known and will likely be studied for years. And yet, some are still fighting to delay a return. The irony of certain in the educational community refusing to now accept the science and the data that will allow us to return is not lost on all parents.

The sooner we are able to get as many kids as possible back to tried and true in-person educational engagement, we should take it. This means adopting the science as it develops and pushing back against those who now reject it without reasonable justifications.

Rafael Gonzalez | Mullen & Henzell L.L.P. | 112 E. Victoria Street | Santa Barbara, CA 93101 | Tel: (805) [redacted]

From: Gonzalez, Rafael
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 12:48 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: Rice, Roger
Subject: RE: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Request for Live Public Comment - March 23, 2021 meeting

Dear Ms. Dahm and Mr. Rice,

I would like to request time to present public comment at tomorrow's meeting. I will send written public comment for the record via separate email. Thanks.

[redacted]

From: Sulin Rubalcava <sulinrubalcavasc@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 6:29 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment Email - Sulin Rubalcava

Dear VUSD Trustees and Dr. Rice,

Thank you for your time devoted to COVID-19 efforts and dedication to the operations of running all VUSD schools. I understand this entire year has been extremely difficult for all.

As a parent of two students at Will Roger's and a child with additional services, and as the Will Roger's SEDAC parent representative. I'm here today with the hope all VUSD Board members ask Dr. Rice and his leadership staff to provide a report and analysis on the following items I will address today.

First and foremost, I always remember the number one priority is to service the students, regardless of the political dynamics. For this reason, I feel compelled to express VUSD staff must dive deeper and take positive actions and steps into the following areas that need to revamped to better service the students:

1) Will Roger's the TWI school needs and has needed additional support in services. The school's student population has grown over the years but have the services grown in comparison to the student population? Furthermore, how can it be that this school has zero in person small groups to support our students while other neighboring schools have in person small group support? How can students with IEPs needs be met when the special education educator is not bilingual?

I bring up all of these points because students are being impacted by all of it, including my own student.

I'm asking all VUSD board members, to please ask staff to provide a TWI comparison analysis of services between Will Roger's and Montalvo, and furthermore compare your two TWI programs across all TWI schools within the county. Within this analysis, I ask that the board to preview the small group distance learning list to ensure there has been a fair access of small groups across all schools regardless of socio economic status.

2) The second point is to address Special Education services in general, but highlighting my experience within Will Roger's. The word on the streets is that Will Roger's is also seen in the special education arena as the school to be cornered with as it relates to special education. For years, I trusted the system and hoped my student would get the appropriate services. But as years passed, I've realized as a parent I have to advocate and defend why my student needs assistance while navigating the complexities in special education. But why? Why must a parent need to go through all this? Why must a parent have to talk amongst parents to find out what services and options are available to support their students' academics versus hearing it from the staff directly? I understand, it's tied to funding and supporting students is expensive, but if we pivot our approach in special education to educate parents, be transparent with them, explain the assessments to parents in terms

they can comprehend, and run workshops and classes informing parents versus spending time in lawsuits we can work together and collaborate.

Today, I'm asking all board of trustees to ask VUSD staff for a Special Education report, and analysis to look into the special education department and services to compare accessibility for students across all schools especially comparing Will Roger's. Do all schools have equitable special education services regardless of the schools socio economic status?

To summarize, I hope in the upcoming board agenda meetings Special Education is its own item on the agenda.

Once again, thank you Dr. Rice and VUSD board for all your time and energy devoted.

Su-Lin Rubalcava
Marketing Strategist
[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Laura <bluegemlaura@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 6:33 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- New CDC guidelines

Please consider the NEW CDC guidelines of 3 feet for social distancing, as opposed to the 4 feet being currently considered. This will allow for more students in classrooms, specifically for middle and high schools.
Thank you,
Laura Kaylor

[redacted]

From: Ellen Laber <ellenlaber@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 6:33 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- written public comment for Tuesday's board meeting

Dear Dr. Rice and Ventura Unified School District Board Members,

I am a parent of 6 children who have attended VUSD schools for the past 14 years. I currently have children in both middle school and high school. I want to thank you for all of the hard work that you have done over the past year to get our students back to in-person learning.

It is hard to believe that our children have been away from VUSD campuses for over a year! As with many working parents, my world was turned upside down last March when my home office was suddenly invaded by 6 little people demanding my attention and my help navigating a new distance learning platform. Many tears of frustration have been shed since then by both my children and myself while attempting to adjust to this "new normal." Although we have made progress since last spring, the overall distance learning experience has been less than positive. While some teachers have risen to the occasion and adapted well to online teaching, many have not, forcing my children to learn on their own or rely on me to teach them.

Thankfully, many of the obstacles that prevented in-person learning a year ago are now being overcome. In addition to an increased understanding of virus transmission and protection, covid case numbers are rapidly declining, vaccines and improved medical treatments are available, and the Federal Government has committed to investing $122 billion into K-12 schools including $10 billion for expanded covid testing. Furthermore, CDPH and VCPH have joined the World Health Organization and the CDC in recommending 3 feet of space between student chairs in classrooms, which should go a long way toward easing the logistics of getting kids back in the classroom for 5 full days per week. We have the tools to get our teachers and children safely back into our secondary schools as so many of our neighboring districts have done already.

Given the dramatic end to in-person instruction and the rapidly changing educational paradigm over the last year, I realize it may not be an easy transition back to full-time in-person learning. Parents, administrators, faculty, and staff will all face many challenges as we reopen secondary schools and learn to live with covid. However, we must accept and overcome these challenges as the welfare of our children depends on it! Dr. Levin, CDPH, and VCPH all agree that in-person instruction is critical for students' successful learning as well as mental and social well-being. Anxiety, depression, and suicide are increasing at alarming rates, and our kids are falling further and further behind the grade level standards. We all need to work together as a community to embrace the evolving science and put a plan into action for secondary students to return to full-time in-person

instruction as soon as possible. Hybrid plans offering a total of 6 hours of in-person instruction per week are not good enough. We must do better. Our kids deserve better.

Sincerely,

Ellen Laber

[redacted]

From: Samantha O. <sammissh@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 8:38 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Written Comment

Hello

My name is Samantha Oerlemans. I am the parent of 5 students in VUSD . Three of my children attend Buena High School, 2 Seniors and 1 sophomore. All three are part of Buena Music. In a normal non covid year, BMA is home to over 170 music and choir students. Like my children, many perform in more than one ensemble.

Tonight, I am not here to advocate for my 3 children in music but for the 120 Marching Band Students I am the representative for.
A little over a week ago the Marching Band got the go ahead to play as a pep band at 3 games being hosted at Buena. The boosters working along side the music director and coaches made it possible for students who wanted to return for 3 games to have waivers signed, uniforms fit, face masks prepared and bell covers handmade because those promised by the district would not arrive till possibly after the first game. We did this not just so our 25 Marching Seniors could participate in Senior Recognition Night (3/26) but, so that our Marching Students could play one last time as a TEAM.

That's right. Music is a Team sport as much as football, water polo, softball, cheer etc… The difference is that on Friday March 19th at 931am, our director along with cheer coaches were told Sorry the band and cheer could not attend. By 5pm Friday night Varsity Cheer was loading a bus and heading to an away game. Just like normal. Because CDPH overturned their decision and noted Sideline cheer was considered a moderate contact sport but, additional guidance would be forthcoming to address the band and drumline. A few hours later that statement posted on the CDPH website about guidance forthcoming regarding band and drumline was removed.

Which is why I am here. It is time to start Advocating for these Marching kids. I am not sure if anyone really understands what it means to be apart of the Marching Band community. Buena has the ONLY marching band in the city of Ventura. Over the weekend our boosters for BMA have been told that members of the school board didn't know the that Marching Band could not resume like other teams and that the school district is just following the CDPH guidelines.

The guidelines: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Consolidated_Schools_Guidance.pdf actually states (page 25): Outdoor singing and band practice are permitted, provided that precautions such as physical distancing and mask wearing are implemented to the maximum extent possible. Playing of wind instruments (any instrument played by the mouth, such as a trumpet or clarinet) is strongly discouraged …School officials, staff, parents, and students should be aware of the increased likelihood for transmission from exhaled aerosols during singing and band practice, and physical distancing beyond 6 feet is strongly recommended for any of these activities. The CDPH does not say can not or will not. It says discouraged and physical distancing beyond 6ft is recommended.

NONE of this mentions anything about what wearing a mask or using a bell cover will do for these possible transmissions of aerosols. It doesn't even mention the fact that they can use them. These items are available NOW for the music students to use and have been scientifically found to be VERY Effective. Many of the schools with in our own county have been using these since December and continue to do so now.

Thanks to the University of Minnesota, U of M researchers are helping maximize safety during performances. https://twin-cities.umn.edu/news-events/musical-instruments-dont-spread-aerosols-far-you-might-think U of M participated in 3 studies over the last 8 months. The first part of Testing included various instruments and rating them by 3 risk categories. Low , Medium and High. The researchers tested various strategies to mitigate the spread of the particles, including using portable filters and instrument masks called bell barriers. They found that by adding a single-layer mask it blocks 60 percent of the particles without reducing much sound quality. Two layers block 75 percent with a slight drop in sound quality, and three layers block 92 percent but causes a substantial loss of sound quality.

The second study included using probes to measure how far the aerosols travel from each instrument. They found that the flow was very confined, and the aerosols dispersed quickly. At only 10 centimeters (about 4 inches) away from the

instrument outlet, the aerosol concentration was less than 10 percent of what it was at the source, and no instruments showed an appreciable influence of flow beyond 30 centimeters (about 1 foot).

The final study https://www.nfhs.org/articles/third-round-of-performing-arts-aerosol-study-produces-more-scientific-data-for-return-to-activities/ which focused on the distribution of respiratory aerosol generated while playing wind instruments – was that if music participants wear surgical-style masks with a slit for the mouthpiece, and use an appropriate bell cover, that aerosol emission is reduced between 60 and 90 percent. In addition to these new findings, the third set of results reinforced several crucial elements from the earlier releases. First and foremost, masks must be worn at all times, and multi-layered bell covers must be used by all instruments.

Another highlight of the third round of results were the more fully developed five principal takeaways related to masks, distance, time, air flow and hygiene
Masks – Masks should be worn by students, and masks/bell covers should be on instruments and materials.
Distance –CDC distancing guidelines of 6 feet by 6 feet should be followed, with additional space (9 feet by 6 feet) for trombone players. The distancing guidelines apply for outdoors as well as indoors.
Air Flow – Outdoor activity remains the best place for air flow.
Hygiene – The strong emphasis continues on hygiene, including frequent handwashing, and cleaning of spit valves and storage areas.

Given this information along with the CDC and the CDPH guidelines I am advocating for these Music students. There is NO reason our Marching Band should not be able to take the field. Our Seniors deserve it. Our members deserve it and our Music families deserve it. VUSD can do better. I expect better. #letthemplayca

Sincerely,
Samantha Oerlemans –BHS Class of 96' and BMA Alumni
Buena High School Marching Band Rep.

[redacted]

From: Lisa Bondy <lisabcrafty@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 9:16 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Secondary Re-Opening

Good Evening!

Thank you so much Dr.Rice and the Board for all your hard work! VUSD is an amazing District.

I'm hoping that SEL Wednesday's will be over when the secondary go back to in person after Spring break. I understand that was also used for teacher planning, but maybe they still will have a few hours later in the afternoon. I liked the idea of group A going M-W one week and the next week Group B would go W-F. I would love them to be back full time now instead of waiting for the Fall.

I'm also willing to help the schools prepare to get the students back on campus. I have a 7th grade son at DATA and a 9th grade son at Foothill, but it doesn't have to only be their schools I can help at.

Thank you for your time,

Lisa Bondy

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

[redacted]

From: Kate Shanahan <kjb.shanahan@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 9:59 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Return to Full-time schedule and support for early elementary classrooms

Hello Board of Education Trustees and Dr. Rice,

What a year it has been! Your roles are difficult in typical times, and I cannot imagine the challenges and stress of leading our school district during our current pandemic. Thank you for your time and dedication to our schools.

I am writing to you as a school psychologist, parent of a preschooler, kindergartener and second grader, and as a community member who believes in our public schools. My oldest two children attended VUSD (kinder and 2nd) until October of this school year. After fall break, our family needed to make a change to their schooling in order to meet our family's needs despite our love of their school, Loma Vista, and their amazing teachers. We support your efforts to bring VUSD students at all levels back to full-time, in-person learning and believe that this can be done safely.

Please prioritize our early elementary kindergarten and 1st grade teachers and students as you work through the details of what the school schedules will look like, and work to allocate the funds being provided to the district. When children enter kindergarten, many do not yet know how to be "students." As we bring these young children back to increased in-person learning time in K and 1st, the curriculum will have advanced, while these children's skills for working as "students" may be far behind.

For years, there has been a noticeable increase in young children entering school with extreme behaviors (running from the classroom, yelling and screaming, aggression towards peers and adults, making threats, etc). I saw this when working as a school psychologist in Baltimore, Maryland from 2010-2017, and more recently in California in CVUSD and VUSD. These social, emotional and behavioral struggles of our youngest schoolchildren will only be greater when returning to school this year and in 2021-2022.

Our kindergarten and first grade classrooms will require additional staffing to provide support to students who need extra time, practice, and opportunity to learn to be students when they return to the classroom for a full-time schedule. Please provide funding and support for hiring additional staff such as paraeductors or teaching assistants to support our district kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms through 2022 (and beyond!).

Providing additional staffing to the K and 1st classrooms will benefit ALL students in these classes, and will set all kids up for success later on. When additional support is available for students who demonstrate extreme behaviors, other students are able to feel safe, and are able to continue learning. At the same time, the children who are struggling receive the time, patience, and practice they need in order to adjust to school and learn to be a student in their class. A kindergarten or first grade teacher cannot do this alone in a class of 20 or 24, and cannot rely on school staff who are not dedicated to their classroom.

Thank you again for all you are doing for our schools during these difficult times!

Sincerely,
Kate Shanahan

[redacted]

From: Michelle Davidson <michellechemistry@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 10:13 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Full time school for all kids

We all seem to agree that having students back in person as much as possible is incredibly important and now that our state approves 3ft distancing, there is no reason why we should not open - I respectfully ask that all our children return full time as soon as possible. The negative effects on their young lives this past year may create lifelong challenges - a decline in mental health, steep learning loss, an increase in child abuse, insurmountable gaps in socioeconomics.... the list can go on.
I am extremely tired of the fact that the science behind covid has been ignored concerning our children and that the Academy of Pediatrics has also been ignored since September. Our children have been lost in a sea of sensationalized fear and politics; they have been exposed to more danger by not having them in a constant school environment - random daycare situations and even lack of care; older students are suffering depression and being exposed to unsafe situations. They have faced extreme measures while the adult world continues to enjoy superfluous freedoms. Creativity has been used by restaurants and gyms and even family centralized YMCAs, yet there has been no strong effort to teach our children in person. Private schools continue to have their children flourish again showing the divide in education between public and private. There is a disconnect about what is truly important in our community and state, and I'm hoping you will do what is right for our young superheroes.

Sincerely,
Professor Davidson

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: jeanascarlett@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 10:37 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- For 3/23 Board meeting

Hi my name is Jeana Van. I currently have a 3rd grader and 5th grader at Juanamaria. My daughter would have been in Kindergarten there, but I put her in private school so she could be in person. This has been a challenging year for everyone. But it is time to get these kids back into school at every level full time. Elementary aged kids need to be with their peers, playing outside at recess, and seeing their teachers everyday face to face. Middle school kids need to know what it's like to change classes in person, and not just sit in front of a screen all day. High school kids are at the age where they need to be at school and be held accountable for and have the social interactions they get through sports or other activities the school has to offer. I know we did a lot less this year, and I have tried to supplement on my own to make up for it, and also tried to accept the fact that they didn't learn as much and that's ok. But none of us can do another year of this. We can't just all of a sudden put them in private school. For one everyone can't afford it and two there is not enough room. I am putting my daughter back in Juanamaria next year so she can be with her brother and my oldest will be going to Balboa. Please don't make me wish I made a different decision. I am putting my faith in you that you can get it together by the Fall and gives these kids the full time schedule they need and deserve. Thank you for the time and effort you have put in so far to try to make this happen. There are a lot of us out there that would be willing to volunteer our time however you needed it to make this happen.

Jeana Van

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Amy Stolworthy <astolworthy4@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 11:18 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- All Schools Full time, In-Person Please

I want to thank the School Board, Superintendent, and everyone who has worked tirelessly on behalf of our children. I know you are trying to do your best for our kids. I have 3 kids at Ventura Unified. One at Balboa and 2 at Foothill. It has been a long hard year for everyone but mostly our children. My seventh grader has fallen behind and struggles so much with distance learning. If I knew it was going to be a year of zoom fatigue and failing grades and hating school, I would have pulled him out day one. I feel guilty that I made him suffer through it because I trusted the school district to have his best interest. I am asking for you to please make all schools full time, in-person for the remainder of this year and the fall. Children are under the law entitled to an in-person education in California. Your A and B schedule would make this happen! We can do it! We can give these children the support they need to build their confidence and love learning. Studies have shown schools are safe. Teachers and staff have been vaccinated. There is no reason children should be on zoom anymore! One year has been long enough.
Thank you
Amy Stolworthy

[redacted]

From: Melissa Sapp <watergal79@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 6:50 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- BACK TO SCHOOL

Good morning.
I am writing to you all in hopes of adding to the masses that wish to return to on campus learning FULL TIME.
We have reached a point where the negative fallout from at home learning has far surpassed anything we could have imagined. Our kids are suffering. They are lonely. They are isolated. They are depressed. They are unhealthy. They are missing social, emotional connections. A Wednesday check in for 10 minutes is hardly an adequate replacement. 2 days a week is not sufficient. 2 days a week is just another hurdle for students and parents alike to juggle their schedules to make work.
This is a plea rather than a ask. My senior in high school has sat behind a blank screen for ONE WHOLE YEAR. The motivation is almost non-existent at this point. It's a heartbreaking cycle to say the least.
Respectfully,
Melissa Sapp

[redacted]

From: Dariann Kobe <darlucarelli@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 9:05 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Full Time In Person

Hello Dr. Rice and Board Members,

First off, thank you for all your hard work to get our kids back to full time school. It is not going unnoticed and as communications have opened up a bit more, I feel parents are a bit more understanding of all the hurdles ahead. That being said, I feel that the districts down in SD have truly opened the path needed to get all of our students back across the state as soon as possible. Courts have ruled that children have a constitutional right to in person learning. It's obvious the state (and other groups) has other interests at play, so it is truly going to come down to VUSD stepping up to be a leader and show how it can be done. And parents are ready to do whatever it takes to ensure VUSD isn't being bullied by vague guidelines that will stand in the way of a full reopening.

We love our teachers and most seem like they truly want to get back in the classroom. I will volunteer until I have to be carried off campus to support every one of those teachers that are willing to do what's right and get back to the classroom. Evidence has surfaced that their union isn't representing the majority of teachers opinions and instead is holding our kids education hostage.

The draft schedules are ok - only ok. Better than where we are, but that's not saying much. As parents we want the best for our kids and I think the schedule, for the remainder of this year, can be much better. For example, why is kinder out at 11:30 each day when pre-COVID that was only true of the banking day hours. My son, who is in the TWI, can surely use the "immersion" he's missed out on this year and even another hour plus 4 days a week can help get us there (like it was pre-COVID).

Please, I'm urging you to keep doing right by these kids. Get them back in school, not just a little, but back to what they deserve and have a right too. You have HUNDREDS of parents backing you and we are willing to take it to the next legal step, similar to those in San Diego, to get our kids what they deserve.

Thank you for your time,
Dariann and Nick Kobe

[redacted]

From: Andrea Kish <andidkish@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 9:19 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Serving our students and our teachers

March 23, 2021

Dear Superintendent Rice and VUSD Board Members,

My husband and I believe, as CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky has said, that schools should be the last places closed and the first places open. We hope to see evidence that our county health leaders and our superintendents believe this as well.

In January, several CDC scientists co-authored an article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, saying there is little evidence that school reopening has contributed meaningfully to the spread of COVID-19. In this article, in schools in North Carolina, a review of districts serving more than 90,000 students and staff found a substantially smaller infection rate within the school as compared to infection rates in the same population outside of the school (32 infections were acquired in school — compared with 773 cases of students and staff infected outside school. None of those 32 in-school transmissions involved students infecting teachers or staff.). In another study of 17 rural Wisconsin schools, high rates of mask-wearing helped keep the COVID-19 incidence lower in schools than in the larger community. Of 191 documented COVID-19 cases among students and staff, just 7 happened at school. (*https://www.npr.org/2021/01/26/960885936/cdc-makes-case-for-school-reopening*)

We have a close family member who has been teaching hybrid high school in northern California since October, and after initial concerns, has never felt put at risk, and thanks to her school's administration's ongoing support and solid implementation, feels much less likely to be exposed to a COVID transmission than in her community at large.

According to new guidelines put forth just this week by the CDC, with universal mask compliance, students should keep a 3 ft distance within classroom settings, not the 6 ft, or then 4 ft that our district was previously discussing just last week. In the months to come, as more people are vaccinated and as our world's epidemiologists understand more and more about the virus and necessary herd immunity levels, it seems severely shortsighted that our district should decide this week whether our schools will be able to open in the Fall or not, based just on what we currently know. If being held to the CDC recommended 3 ft student social distancing (6 ft from teacher) *still* makes complete reopening out of the question for our district as currently configured, then I implore us as a community to not resign ourselves to a suboptimal educational experience for all involved, but to figure out other ways to get all our kids back into our schools every day.

If skyrocketing rates of anxiety and depression in our children and young adults are not enough evidence, then the shocking rates of students not turning in assignments or attending their zoom classrooms should alert us to the extent of this crisis. If New York can put up tents in the middle of winter to teach their students, then Ventura should be able to erect temporary tents, or even better, more permanent additional facilities that can be relied upon in the future if another pandemic or something equally as destructive comes our way. There could be no better way to use the additional funding granted to our district than to hire more secondary school teachers and improve our facilities for the long term.

We hope that some sort of virtual academy scenario (through your FLEX program, possibly?) is considered to accommodate those students and teachers who want to stay with distance learning next year. (We would be very curious to know if your survey has given you a picture of how many students want to continue learning in this way in the 2021-2022 school year.) Teaching to in-person students and virtual students simultaneously (especially if you have over 36 students in your class) is a Herculean effort, and we think our teacher's precious but finite resources should be directed to one or the other of these groups.

It is frustrating as parents when we see other districts within Ventura County more readily and creatively able to get their students back into classrooms while we are still hamstrung by out of date science.

We look to you to have the best interests of our children at heart. We as parents are here to do whatever we can to support the goal of getting our children back in school in a way that is safe for all.

With our support,

Andi and Ed Kish

[redacted]

From: Heather Austin <heatherannaustin@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 9:28 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Support for Option A and B

Hello All,
I want to voice my support for the Secondary Option A and B. It would be the best choice for my family and it would be the best use of instruction time for students and teachers. I love the idea of no zoom for teachers to hassle with and it would give students quality instruction due to the class time extension.

Thank you for making this option a possibility.

Respectfully,
Heather Austin

[redacted]

From: Keely Henkel <keelyhenkel@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 9:29 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- all students need full time in person education now

Dear Dr. Rice and Board members,
Thank you for your continued support and efforts for all children and families of VUSD. At this time things seem to be ever changing and with that comes more opportunity to get our children, all of them, back in school full time. This is my simple plea, let them go back full time, now. The research and recommendations are now showing that it is safe for them to return, they need to be in school- educationally, mentally, and socially distance learning has taken its toll.
I personally have 3 children in the district- elementary, middle and high school. Yesterday I had a parent teacher conference for my 4th grader, prior to covid and school closures she was struggling, unfortunately distance learning has not been able to provide the support and education that she needs. I don't fault the teachers-she has an amazing teacher who is working hard, or the school district, these things have been out of everyone's control. The choices that have been made were done so for the safety and in the best interest of all. But now it's time to get them back in the classrooms full time. It's safe, it's possible and it needs to happen now, not in the fall or at some later date. Please help make this happen. Again, thank you for all you have done and I know you will continue to make the best choices to support all students at VUSD.
Respectfully,
Keely Henkel
Parent, and VUSD employee

[redacted]

From: Joan Bennett <joanlbennett@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 9:41 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Board Meeting public comment 3/23/21

VUSD School Board,

Thank you for your consistent efforts and commitment to getting our students back in school full time! We are looking forward to a great 3rd trimester of in-person learning.

I am fully in support of forgoing the online social/emotional learning on Wednesdays, to be replaced with a full day of in-person school, which is where the real social/emotional learning happens.
Please keep in mind that recess and outdoor play experiences are vital to our children's health. Keep our kids in school full-time hours and please do not sacrifice recess - an important in-person physical and social learning opportunity.

Thank you for your hard work! Your forward movement towards a full reopening is greatly appreciated!

Joan Bennett, Parent of 2 Loma Vista Elementary students

[redacted]

From: Joel C Bennett <joelcbennett@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 10:01 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Board Meeting public comment 3/23/21

VUSD-

Thank you for your work towards re-opening! We fully support forgoing online social/emotional Wednesdays, favoring in-person school for reasons which are obvious. Social emotional development happens best in the context of other people, so please do not put the desires of the union in front of the needs of the children.

Further, please do not sacrifice recess. That is a very important part of kids development in conjunction with sit-at-desk learning. Recess is part of social and emotional development!

Thanks,
Joel Bennett
Parent of 2 VUSD students

[redacted]

From: Tommy Plezakowski <TPleaze@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 10:06 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Board Meeting public comment for March 23rd

VUSD-

First, thank you so much for your work towards in-person re-opening! This is the clear desire of the community, and is obviously the best thing for the children. Mr. Rice has really won me over and I appreciate his leadership.

Second, please do not let the teacher's union put their own self-interests above the needs of the kids. We should not be cutting Wednesday in-person, nor should we be shortening the school day (i.e recess!)! I find it shameful that in this time and place the union is trying to reduce, avoid, or abandon the responsibilities that they are being paid for by the community, at the expense of the kids! We can safely re-open, as demonstrated by a number of other industries, private schools, and public schools outside of California. Don't cut in-person learning, please.

-Tony

[redacted]

From: Melyssa Noren <m.noren@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 10:24 AM
To: Rice, Roger; Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Comment for Meeting

Dear Dr. Rice and VUSD Board,

THANK YOU so much for continuing your fight to return our students to full time school. As an elementary parent, I am writing to reiterate my stance on a full safe return to in person school. With all the science that has been shared, especially the reduction of distancing in schools to 3 feet, I believe it is time to get our kids back into their pre-covid schedule. We have also seen many months of success in districts across the nation going full time, and with the addition of vaccinations, I'm feeling really confident that we can do this! There are just two things I hope the district considers...

1. Schedule. Please do not take Wednesdays off completely or make them an SEL day still. I'm not sure this is a real consideration, but the rumors are flying! At the elementary level, consistency is critical! Wednesday is the worst day of our week EVERY. SINGLE. WEEK. due to lack of structure and a change in our routine. If a full day off is needed, I'd like to see it Monday or Friday so it is not as disruptive. I FULLY support the return of a minimum day for teacher prep.

2. I am struggling to understand why school would get out at 2:00 (as shown on the proposed schedule) instead of the previous 2:20 (or whatever the campus had lined up). Cutting out a final recess to send them home early seems like a detriment to their social and emotional learning. The playground is where so much leadership growth and problem solving occurs. I have watched my kids interact at sports practices, and it has taken them time to adjust to being fully social again. They need these interactions! If there is some other reason, such as transportation, please share those with us so we can be supportive in understanding why things aren't fully normal.

Again, I want to say thank you. I know none of this is easy or what you signed up for!

Melyssa Noren

[redacted]

From: Julie Heidrick <julieheidrick@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 11:11 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- March 23

Dear Dr. Rice and board members,

Please do everything in your power to get ALL students back in school FULL time. With the new 3 ft social distancing rule and lawsuits against Gavin Newsom, there should be no excuse.

Teachers have had the opportunity to be vaccinated, so they need to get back to in person teaching. Students need to be in school for their mental well-being. It's been over a year for our secondary students.

The teachers unions need to stand up for students. It sure doesn't feel like they are working for OUR FUTURE! The unions are creating a divide, a divide that may be very difficult to mend. We need them to be partners in our children's education.

Meanwhile, other professionals have been working full time at "in person" jobs. Jobs where they interact with the public..... sometimes in very dangerous situations. Many individuals even having to travel on airplanes for their jobs without having the vaccine. The majority of jobs can't be done virtually for any length of time!

Please encourage the teachers of VUSD not willing to return, to follow the science of infectious disease doctors, experts, and scientists. Studies show it is safe to return to school.

No more zoom! Enough is enough!

Sincerely,
Julie Heidrick

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Marisamurphy1 <marisamurphy1@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 11:30 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- End of Zoom

Dear VUSD and to all it May Concern,

When is enough going to be enough? At what point are we going to draw the line and tell the teachers who are living in fear to get back to work? They all have now had the opportunity to vaccinate, the science shows that children aren't a high risk factor, we have the ability to clean and sanitize, and we received $19 million from the Cares Act to be able to accommodate the students, the teachers, and make facility adjustments. This does not include any additional funds the VUSD is receiving or yet to receive.

For those who don't want to return to "in person" instruction, they need to be let go. They are a cancer that is preventing the ability to successfully teach these children. For I live in fear everyday that you are contributing to the failure of my children. I have three children who are struggling daily with their studies and emotional/social issues. Fortunately they are all athletes and have returned to their sports which has been incredible for them. What's amazing is that even with this return to sports, the virus continues to magically decline. And these are sports where kids are not wearing masks and their sweaty bodies are up against strangers.

I have personally taken off 17 days of work (unpaid) to help my children with their studies. This does not include days when I was able to work from home and assist. I want to know, where's my bonus? How do I get in on that since I had to step in and take over teacher responsibilities? And what about kids that have zero parent support?. They don't have anyone else and the teachers are "unavailable". Students shouldn't have to wait five days to get an email response on assignment clarity for something that was due within that time frame. The whole system is broken and I'm simply asking you to fix it.

There is no reason for the VUSD students to not return to fall classes 100% full time. If you can't figure out how to do that, then shame on you for not thinking outside the box and getting creative or having the strength to draw the line.

Please know that we support our teachers 100% and want to encourage them to get back where they belong. Every teacher who I have spoken to directly states this is their desire. So it's confusing on where the push back is coming from. Everyone is pointing fingers and we don't know who is truly accountable. Right now the pointer is directed at Dan Nelson with the VUEA and the grievances he has filed. How do we get rid of him? If I'm wrong on that, then I apologize. But his email that went out last week wasn't kept "confidential" as he had hoped.

We are super thankful to those involved who are continuously trying to push forward. I understand it is difficult when they are met with resistance. So whoever you are, I hope you recognize that in yourself and I want to thank you. Thank you for your effort to open up the schools and to get the students back in full time. I wish I could thank you personally but as parents, we don't know who is what side at this point.

END THE ZOOM!!

Thank you.

Marisa Murphy
Sent from my iPhone
[redacted]
Please excuse the Typos

[redacted]

From: Emma Bograd <emma.bograd@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 11:35 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Live Public Comment

Hi, I'm Emma Bograd,
president of the Buena music student council and co-drum captain. Along with many of my classmates I have been part of the music program at Buena for 4 years.

First I would like to start by saying thank you for acknowledging and reversing the decision that did not allow marching band and colorguard at football games. We took the news hard and it was really encouraging to see that our voices were heard and change was made.

However, being in a situation where we were initially allowed to participate and then being told that we could not go, reinforced the feeling that we are seen as secondary to our fellow classmates. While we greatly appreciate the changes that have been made, we ask that you continue to keep music in mind as an equally important activity at our school, as we navigate the remainder of this school year, and the future years to come.

Thank you

[redacted]

From: Hayes, Teresa Hayes <teresa.hayes@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 12:15 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Concerns about reopening and eliminating SEL

I am resending this letter as I have not had a reply from the original sent on 3/18/2021. Please see below.

March 18, 2021

Dear School Board Members,

I am writing because, like you, I want to see the students in our schools succeed but the students will not succeed if you have burnt out, unappreciated, and overwhelmed staff. This is how many of us are feeling right now. Our voices are not being heard and if they are heard they are not being respected or included in the decisions.

I am speaking as a teacher, parent, and community member. I am a lifelong resident of Ventura and a product of the VUSD school system. I love my community and school so much that I came back to teach at my alma mater, Buena High School. I currently have a son that is a junior at Foothill and my daughter graduated from Buena. No matter where I go I run into people I know from school in some way: former and current students, former classmates, parents of students, coworkers, etc. I am a vested member in this community. I have been teaching high school in VUSD for 24 years. Everyday I look forward to educating and interacting with my students, but I am also frustrated and overwhelmed.

Taking SEL from the secondary schedule is not a tenable option. As teachers we are constantly being asked to do more. We have created our own curriculum and built our courses in Canvas, many, like myself, without extra pay or compensation because we teach singleton courses. We advance our craft through online professional development, creating interactive and inclusive lessons to encourage our students and keep them engaged. We attend meetings and participate in committees only to have the choices made for us. When will our voices be heard?

When do you expect us to grade assignments, continue developing and modifying our curriculum, email parents, staff and students, build in Canvas, work on our own mental health? We cannot do it all. I am an 80% teacher; I work all week and at least one day every weekend, this is with the current SEL day in our schedule. I have had to redo all of my lectures and recreate them to be more interactive through Nearpod and Peardeck. Additionally, any worksheet that I want to use now has to be typed up and revised into a digital format so I can post it in Canvas. I have converted videos into Edpuzzles with embedded questions so students will remain engaged through the entire video. I could go on and on. All of this takes so much time. I cannot give up any more time. I have no more time to give. I have talked with many other teachers that are living the same experiences. We are burnt out. We are frustrated. We are overwhelmed. We don't even have the proper tools to teach in hybrid. My school told me we do not have speakers for the classrooms. "They are looking into it." And yet I am asked to "have a positive attitude" and give more.

There are so many changes we are feeling dizzy. Just last week we learned that students will sit 4 feet apart, even though the MOU states 6 feet. Additionally, we were informed that secondary teachers are losing two days at the end of the quarter for 'orientation', so adjust our teaching and pacing. Oh by the way, juniors will be out of class two additional days in March for testing; be flexible, modify your lessons and remain positive. Curriculum and education is going to suffer. How do we maintain continuity when we are forever having to readjust? How can we continue to build engaging lessons without time? Student learning will suffer even more if teachers do not have time built into our schedule.

Furthermore, what happened to the agreed upon MOU between the district and VUEA? It was my understanding that the schedule cannot be changed without union negotiations or input. Yet that has not taken place. VUEA and the staff of VUSD are being told what the district wants and expects. This is not a healthy way to run an organization. There is a growing seed of distrust within our district. I hope we can find a way to rebuild the trust and sense of community that VUSD used to have. To do this all parties need to be heard and opinions considered. Do not take the SEL days. Only bring back the 9th graders on April 1st. That would be a start in the right direction. Teachers are on the front lines and our first hand experiences do matter.

Respectfully,
Teresa Hayes

[redacted]

From: MB Galindo <galindobills528@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 12:17 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Board meeting 3/23/21, agenda item reopening of schools update

I am encouraged to see the CDC, CDPH, and VCPH in alignment and finally updating their guidelines to reflect data that was proven in September 2020 which is no longer hindering a full time return to campus. I am glad to finally be seeing legal precedents set throughout the state based on the established California education code that are shining a light on the current shortcomings and failed practices of distance learning and hybrid models. I am confident that Dr. Rice and his team as well as the Board are doing and will continue to do their due diligence in aligning the reopening of all our schools with those laws and policies while using the guidelines to assist in bringing about peace of mind for those who still find themselves concerned with campus safety.

I have also found a confidence in a group of VUSD parents who have started a Parent Association chapter in Ventura and are passionate about advocating for all VUSD children's rights to a full time, in person education and who are willing to take additional steps other county's have been forced to take to guarantee full, in person access for all K-12, not just elementary.

I applaud the steps taken thus by all involved to getting elementary closer to the pre-pandemic schedule and recognize that the most recent VUEA proposed draft schedule for elementary seeks to be in alignment with the legal obligation to provide full time, in person education to all students who want it while dealing with prep needs and staffing limitations. For the remainder of this school year, I find the proposed schedule fair and reasonable.

In light of recent state policy, guideline updates, and legal precedents being set throughout the state and through the work of the Ventura Chapter of the Parent Association, I am hopeful that Dr. Rice, his team and the board will see to it that secondary schools are brought to a full reopening by April 12th, 2021.

Thank you for your leadership during this unprecedented school year and for advocating for the greatest extent possible of in person education.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Galindo, Montalvo parent 1st and 4th grade
[redacted]

[redacted]

From: The HoodLims <hoodlims@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 12:18 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- In favor of reopening schools

Hello,

I am writing this email in support of reopening schools in a traditional manner, in addition to supporting the market we already have of alternative education in the form of homeschooling or independent studies.

There have been so many complications discussed when it comes to reopening schools. Hybrid programs where teachers teach half the students at a time (A vs B), with a third group (C) zooming in. Who is supposed to be teaching the online group while the in person group is also being taught? Or I have heard (not from this district) of plans where secondary students stay in a classroom and zoom out to other teachers, while their homeroom teachers engage with their other classrooms standing behind their desks. What is the incentive in coming back to school then?

Why can we not just go the route of A) Traditional school. You go to class, you have classmates and a teacher under one roof who only pays attention to the students in his/her physical care. vs B) Alternative education (I use this term for distance learning, not for students who are credit deficient). You prefer distance learning and so you sign up for the distance learning program offered by your district. Why are we trying to make every type of school happen under one roof?

If we look at this from an economic standpoint, the market (students and families) will drive the needs of the district. I believe you will find that the majority of families prefer their students to be back in person, full time, with peers and without their teacher being on a screen. There will be some who prefer distance/alternative education, and they will drive the need to fill the market the district *already has* with HomeStead and Independent Studies. Teachers who are not comfortable going back to traditional schooling need to then apply for that independent studies market. Teachers who do not want to return to traditional schooling should apply for unpaid leave. *(Side note: as a teacher myself, I make an analogy to when I had children and took maternity leave. I was not comfortable coming back after a short 6 weeks of maternity leave, so I took my personal necessity leave and was unpaid after exhausting my sick days. I think the district is encouraging this and it is possible teachers are holding this as a bargaining tool to not return...let them. Call their bluff and increase marketing the need for subs).* Back to the market/economics of this all. If schools DO NOT go back full time, in person, you will find that the market for public schools and public school educators will shrink. We already know that nearly 500 families have left the district for private schools, home schools, or even **out of state** schools. Please do not let that continue. There will be a massive RIF of teachers, which I am sure the unions do not want.

Other states and even other counties in our state have been back in school. Those with the means have had their students in private schools in our very city for months. The losses to public school students will add up. Our students will not be able to compete at the same level if they keep on continuing. The achievement gap will continue to grow. Let's make Ventura a place where people want to continue living, and sending their children to school.

Thank you,
Kristy Lim

[redacted]

From: LOREN HAAR <lohaar@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 12:38 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Some thoughts from a concerned parent

Hello — my husband and I support the full and immediate reopening of schools K through 12. We believe that every major agency supports this — CDC, WHO, CDPH, VCPH. We know that you are planning to re-open elementary fully, and we thank you for that, but ask that you seriously consider the repercussions of waiting until Fall to fully re-open secondary — including legal repercussions as we must open fully to the greatest extent possible, but also including the significant damage that our secondary students will experience. They need to be back in school, full time, immediately. There are no more roadblocks. Let's make it happen.

We sincerely appreciate all of your efforts and support of our children!
Loren and Christoph Haar, Loma Vista

[redacted]

From: Tiffany Barnhart <tiffany.barnhart4@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 1:05 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- March 23rd Board Meeting

Dear Ventura Unified School District,

I am writing to urge you to reopen secondary schools 5 days per week as soon as possible. Yesterday on Monday March 22, 2021 my 6th grade student at Cabrillo Middle School was able to attend his first in person small group session for Beginning Strings. My son was so nervous that he was curled up in a ball on the floor of his bedroom begging not to go. I explained to him that he can be brave and get through one hour on campus and he reluctantly got his instrument and got into the car. He refused to sit in the front seat with me and was very quiet on the drive to school. He asked again when we arrived, "Do I have to go Mom?" I told him "Yes, it is for just one hour and your classmates are just as nervous as you are right now." I picked him up one hour later and he hurried to the car with a SMILE on his face. He put his instrument into the back seat and closed the door, then proceeded to get into the front seat of the car. I asked him how it went, he said "It was great. I wasn't the only one having trouble and my teacher helped me tune my instrument and I started to learn how to play in rhythm with my class." As a mother I was absolutely elated that he was finally smiling! Just one hour on campus changed his entire demeanor. Our children desperately need to return to campus for their mental health. I am ready to see my child smile again everyday and returning to school is a huge factor for the happiness of my 6th grader. We are missing a huge part of adolescent development because they need social interaction to have healthy emotional development. School needs to be on campus and not on zoom. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Tiffany Barnhart

[redacted]

From: Annette Taylor <annettetlr@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 1:30 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- An argument for gradual Hybrid Instruction

Firstly, I want to say that I am not a teacher, but I have many friends who are. I will concede that the hybrid models seem like a lot of extra work for them, but this is a temporary and unique situation, so no one really knows what the "best" answers are.

Every person I shared the original hybrid plan with said something like "That sounds reasonable. A good compromise!" And in my opinion, it is.

For me, the gradual hybrid plan proposed many months ago makes the most sense. It seems that now there are elementary school families who chose the remote only option back then that are concerned that their kids will miss out if only some kids physically go back to school. And for secondary, hybrid plans are being postponed because of very recently unearthed CDC technicalities. But the concern for personal liberties should not eclipse the fact that there is still a pandemic going on. We should not put our heads in the sand and pretend things can just go back to normal. They are not. Not yet. Even though we wish they were. I do not think we should just jump back in the pool. We should wade in, and the original hybrid plans seemed to allow for middle ground.

Thank-you for giving me the opportunity to share my opinion. I apologize if my attempts to process this situation have resulted in an oversimplification of the circumstances. I appreciate all your time and attention to getting our kids back to school as safely and as soon as possible.

Annette Taylor

[redacted]

From: Cadence Oerlemans <cadenceoerlemans@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 1:38 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- public comment

Good evening,

My name is Cadence Oerlemans and I am a sophomore at Buena High school. I am a part of Buena Music Student Council and currently represent the Students for the Marching Band.
While I understand the CDPH reversed the policy yesterday there are several things that I would like to ask and share with you.

- How can you be a voice for
- the students of Ventura unified and still let voices go unheard and unnoticed?

- After talking with many
- other students, we feel that the board does not represent the music programs as much as they do sports. Every time music was brought up in the past few board meetings it has been lumped in with sports and once again skipped over. It's always "details to come"
- never "details here" and we feel it has happened too often.

- We appreciate and thank
- the board for giving the marching band the opportunity to play at our football games but where was the communication when the Marching band, drumlines, and Colorguard were taken off of the CDPH website? We thought we had been once again, overlooked.

- We hear you say that you
- don't want to give us false hope. It's understandable considering the last year but the thing is, for a lot of your music students, there is starting to be less and less hope to give and lose. We asked, for one thing, this year, and that was to be able to
- play our instruments and do what we love. We offered every possible solution and are willing to do everything in order to play yet all we got in return was "information to come"

- I have two siblings this
- year that are both seniors in music I not only speak for them but for every senior this year who has lost their last year of high school to this pandemic.

- After hearing that we would
- no longer be able to play at the football games Friday morning we were devastated only to hear that the ruling was reversed for cheer and that they got on the bus and went to support our team at an away game. Still, no comment was made towards music.

- Why can football stand face
- to face with players from another team yet we can't be in the stands socially distanced?

- I do not want my statements
- to be mistaken as an ungrateful student because we appreciate everything you have done for us, all we ask is that you advocate for all and let us play.

Thank you for your time.
Cadence Oerlemans

[redacted]

From: Elizabeth England <eengland123@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 1:41 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- PUBLIC COMMENT/QUESTION FOR: VUSD Board of Education Mtg on 3/23/2021 7 pm

Importance: High

Hi, VUSD Board –

I have a PUBLIC COMMENT / QUESTION for tonight's VUSD Meeting. I left several messages at the School District offices a few weeks ago (I was transferred to different voicemails where I left messages), but I have not yet received an answer (I fully understand how busy everyone is!), so I would like to bring up the comment/question here to be addressed at tonight's meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT / QUESTION:

- **According to the Senate Bill "SB-328 - Pupil attendance: school start time" signed by Governor Newsom on October 13, 2019, all California high schools must start no earlier than 8:30 AM "by July 1, 2022, or the date on which a school district's or charter school's respective collective bargaining agreement that is operative on January 1, 2020, expires, whichever is later."**

  Will this change to the VUSD high school start time take effect with the next school year (August 2021 – June 2022), or will it be delayed until the 2022-2023 school year (the last possible school year allowed for this change to be implemented)? As the school schedule is still in flux for the next school year (2021-2022), I would request and strongly suggest that this later (8:30 AM) start time BEGIN on August 25, 2021 for the next (2021-22) school year. It will provide our students with the extra morning sleep time they so desperately need for the next school year, which will be such a critical year for students to catch up on and re-adjust to onsite education after the challenging distance learning this past year (plus).

  As studies have shown (the basis for this new law), students show the following benefits when they start school later and have more time for sleep:
  - **Improved attendance at school.**
  - **Decreased tardiness.**
  - **Better student grades.**
  - **Fewer occurrences of falling asleep in class.**
  - **Reduced irritability.**
  - **Reduction of depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation.**
  - **Fewer disciplinary issues.**
  - **Fewer risk-taking behaviors (including bullying and fighting).**
  - **Fewer unhealthy behaviors (including drug & alcohol use, smoking).**

- **Lower risk of athletic injury.**
- **A decline of motor vehicle crashes.**

As an upcoming high school parent, I would very much like to see this change take place ASAP, which would be this next school year.

THANK YOU!!

Sincerely,
Elizabeth England
VUSD Parent

[redacted]

From: Lacie Tarrant <lctarrant13@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 1:49 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Kids should be back

Hello,
I have a first grader and I believe whole-heartedly that kids should be back in school full time. Please do away with SEL on Wednesdays - this has been a waste of time from the start. The only way to get these kids back on track (academically and socially) is a full return to the classroom. Even minimal Fridays are disadvantageous at this point. I have personally racked up thousands of dollars in private online tutoring to make up for the lack of instruction days in our district. If restaurants, sports and bars are back open, our kids should be in school full time. We live in one of the best climates in the world. Let's also take advantage of outdoor learning.
Thank you for supporting our kids,
Lacie Tarrant

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Lacie Tarrant** <lctarrant13[redacted]
Date: Tue, Mar 9, 2021 at 2:54 PM
Subject: Kids Should Be Back
To: public.comment@venturausd.org <public.comment@venturausd.org>

Hello,
I have a 1st grader at Loma Vista. It is important to our family that the kids are back to in-person learning 5 days a week. If that is not a possibility, then at least call-off the SEL day as it is a complete waste of time!

Thank You!
Lacie Tarrant

[redacted]

From: Herrera, Kelly
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 2:23 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Proposed Secondary Schedule and Impact to Small Groups

Dear Board of Trustees,

I writing to ask you to consider how the proposed Secondary Schedule will impact Small Groups.

I have two Small Group sessions each week on M/Th from 1-2 pm and they have been running since November. I have a consistent group of students on each day, and it has been a beneficial experience in providing academic support and enrichment. Many of the students who attend my Small Group are choosing to stay in Distance Learning, but they are counting on continued Small Group support.

Because of the time changes in the proposed Secondary Schedule, our school day on campus will not end until later in the day. There is not sufficient time to complete my daily tasks at the end of the school day and schedule a Small Group session before my daughter needs to be picked up from child care.

The Small Groups have provided a valuable service to students during the past two quarters, and many students are counting on the continued support to finish out the school year.

Thank you for your time,

Kelly Herrera

Kelly Herrera, English Teacher and Co-Department Chair
Buena High School

5670 Telegraph Road
Ventura CA 93003
[redacted]

For the future of every student

Ventura Unified SCHOOL DISTRICT | BUENA HIGH SCHOOL

[redacted]

From: Sshee MMuurr <lb2vta@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 2:24 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Busses

Please provide busses to transport kids to secondary school sites.
Please allow the windows to be open on the busses when students are riding the busses.

Thank you,
Sheila Murphy

[redacted]

From: Jacqueline Meyer <jackie.e.rosner@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 3:00 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment Email Board Meeting 3/23/2021

Dear VUSD Board,
We moved to Ventura, two years ago, because it had amazing opportunities for our children. We wanted the high quality education,the dual immersion schools, the and GATE program for our children.
But all of that lasted for only a year. Since March of last year, my kids have been subjected to less than a minimal education, almost no instruction in Spanish, and a broken GATE program.
What's going on?
Whenever I question my children's teachers about why they spend so little time teaching, they cite a vague concept called "Screen Time." There is no science that says that it's bad for children to spend a full school day in an online class. In fact, there are many online schools that function well.
But there is plenty of science that says that students need to spend sufficient time in class to be able to learn. VUSD has provided 3 hours or less a day of instruction to each student.
In another couple years, some students will thank their teachers and schools for staying open and working hard to provide them with high-quality educations. VUSD students will never say that, because they haven't had adequate educations. In fact, I believe that VUSD will be the butt of many jokes.
What would it take for you to give a quality education to each student under your care? I am happy to do everything in my power to make that happen.
Sincerely,
Jackie Meyer

[redacted]

From: Jamie King <antjamie1@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 3:15 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Comments for board meeting on future school schedule.

Hello,

My name is Jamie King. I am a parent of a fourth grader at Will Rogers Elementary and seventh grader at Anacapa middle school. I want to provide feedback on our children's return to school.

In my strong opinion **our children need to get back to full-time school as soon as possible**. Even the most focused child is getting worn down by the ongoing zoom calls and lack of contact with their peers. In cases where parent supervision/Engagement is limited, kids are falling further and further behind.

My family strongly supports
going back full-time at both the elementary and middle school
levels. **which includes being at school on Wednesdays.** If Wednesday's are truly needed as a teacher prep time, then our family would prefer it to be a no contact day. I would think that with an 8-hr work day, there is adequate time for teachers prep before or after school if they are managing an in person class alone. Trying to coordinate attendance for a half hour class for multiple children at different grade levels is challenging and doesn't make for a functional day due to childcare demands or to allow families to have meaningful activities occur without interruption for a class with questionable value. **SEL is an important topic, but should be addressed throughout the week.**

With all the open space available at school and the amazing weather we all enjoy, it seems like **we should be able to get creative and use our outdoor spaces to allow kids on-site full time.** Parents might even consider an alternative schedule but would want to see what that looks like first.

And finally, the **district is missing out on key resources by not allowing parent volunteer support.** Screen us as needed and require appropriate Covid protection and other measures. More engaged adult bodies means more free supervision for kids, more ears to listen to students reading or help work out math challenges.

In summary:

Working parents need kids to be at school so they can maintain their jobs.

Kids need to be with other kids and need the engagement and professional teaching that only full-time school provides.

Please be leaders VUSD and make this happen.

Thank you, Jamie King
Antjamie1@[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Beth & John Martinez <martinezjb@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 3:28 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Return to Full Time Elementary

Dear VUSD School Board and Dr. Rice,

The last year has been a roller coaster of a year. One with more twists and turns than I ever want to experience again. Although the ride has been crazy, I want to thank you all for keeping safety at the forefront. At times you heeded the warnings of experts and made tough decision. And now you have the opportunity to continue to follow the science and open our schools fully.

As an elementary Hybrid educator, I fully support returning students to the classroom full-time. I have seen so much progress from my students with only seeing them two days a week, I can't wait to see what they can do with five days a week. I would like see the same amount of learning time as in previous years put into effect for the end of the 20/21 school year. With the new social distancing rules, all of my 26 students will fit into my classroom. They are so excited to see their friends, in person , who are in the other cohort. Thank you for purchasing new modern desks that will better fit my students needs and provide additional room in my classroom.

In years past, I had up to 35 students in my classroom. While these students can fit into the classroom, that doesn't mean 35 student should be put into an upper grade elementary classroom. I highly recommend that caps are put on class sizes for both the end of this year and beyond. Twenty-five students is the optimum number of students that should be in an upper grade classroom.

Over the last week, I held conferences for all of my students. The families were so happy to hear about the progress their students have been making throughout the year. But the most asked questions was, "When will they be going back everyday?" I told them as soon as I know, they will know. I'm hoping there is a plan my Friday, March 26th.

Thank you for your commitment to the community of Ventura. I'm ready to get off this Covid Coaster and return to the every day learning and fun in the classroom.

Thank you for you time and consideration.

Elizabeth Walker Martinez
Grade 5, EP Foster STEM
Elizabeth Walker Martinez

[redacted]

From: Stefanie Hathaway <stefaniehathaway@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 3:43 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Full Time In Person School K-12

Dear VUSD Board,
Thank you for the tireless efforts that you have made this past year, and especially this past month as we try to bring all our kids back to full time school.

My message today is about giving our kids, teachers, and families here in Ventura consistency and routine. We have been stripped of this for the past year, and getting back into a predictable, consistent routine will help everyone across the board.

In terms of this spring for elementary, please do everything you can to get kids going to school each consecutive day, including Wednesdays. For my five year old, waking up and not knowing if it is a school day, what timeline to expect and how to navigate those emotions is a big deal. A break in our routine mid-week makes life feel disjointed and unpredictable for my kids. In person school every day is reasonable, and if we must have a banking day, please petition for it to be on a Friday!

For secondary this spring, the issue with the hybrid model is much the same. Some days are one way, some days another- it is inconsistent for kids. Humans thrive with routines and the best we can offer our students is an A+B together model as soon as possible. A structure where kids wake up and go to school every day.

For the 2021-22 school year, my hope and expectation is to have my kids and every child K-12 in Ventura (and all of California!) getting an education in person, full time.

Thank you for your efforts to do right by kids!
Stefanie Hathaway

--
Stefanie Hathaway
[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Miyata, Heather
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 3:44 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Secondary Schedule

Hello,

I am a high school teacher and though I am very excited to return and see my students in person, after reviewing the proposed scheduled I have one major concern – the time. The proposed schedule has class periods lasting 85 minutes. Though I am a huge proponent of block schedule in a normal year, I am worried that this schedule will cause more frustrations and disengagement with students. Secondary students have been distance learning for a year and have not had to be in a classroom, follow classroom procedures or be accountable for their work during this time. I am concerned that this is a huge change for them to adjust to, to be in a classroom for 85 minutes, wearing a mask, and socially distancing from other classmates. In addition to the struggles students will face in person, this is now requiring our distance learning students, about half of our student body, to now be in zoom classes for longer periods of time. My hope for these last 2 months of in person school was to engage and support students to be reconnected with school. Throwing them into an intense block schedule 5 days a week is going to cause our more at-risk students to check out further.

I understand creating a schedule is extremely difficult and I appreciate all of the work that has been done, thank you for considering all students.

[redacted]

From: Sara Gray <saracgray[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 3:46 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- School In-Person Comment

Dear Ventura Unified School District Board Members & Dr. Rice,

Thank you for your tireless efforts to ensure the safety of our students and staff during this challenging time.

I have reviewed the elementary in person schedule currently being negotiated and as a parent I support this. My daughter is in the second grade and has missed out on so many learning opportunities due to the delay of VUSD getting things moving in the right direction with a return to in-person learning and small group opportunities. We look forward to school 5 days a week and no classes being offered through Zoom. I have taken over the role of teacher for my daughter because the Zoom that was offered to us through Poinsettia was unimaginably unprofessional and ineffective.

I am incredibly disappointed that it is March 23, 2021 and my child has yet to receive in-person, small-group reading intervention that the school board said months ago MUST be offered at each site. The school board commented that it is inequitable to offer these opportunities at some sites and not others! My daughter is now behind in her reading due to not having access to these opportunities. It is **inexcusable that Poinsettia** does not have this figured out, as we are now approaching the end of the school year! I would like someone to explain to me why this is the case.

I am also a teacher and the mother of two young children. I provide quality education to my students' families and I expect that my children will receive such quality education from their teachers, principals and overarching district.

My hope for the fall is that elementary sites will return to their regular pre-covid schedules.

I am asking you to think carefully about the plans for 2021-2022 so that we can keep students on campus in person as much as possible in the event things change with the pandemic. Students who need the option of distance learning next year should have quality programs to meet their needs.

Thank you again for your time.

[redacted]

From: Lisa Clement <lisa.clement09[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 3:58 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Who is the union representing our kids?

This video is too personal to for the public, but I need to share the rawness of what's really going on. It's hard to watch. I've spoken to many parents and my daughter is NOT THE ONLY ONE!

Secondary School needs to go back to FULL IN-PERSON learning! Zoom is killing our kids. Let this plea hold weight on your decisions!

[redacted]

From: Marisa Brown <mb93004@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 3:59 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER-

I want to share with you a personal experience we had in our home yesterday morning. My high school age daughter came to me and said, ``Mom, my teacher just said we only have 15 minutes to solve these chemistry equations on a quiz, and I am worried I won't be able to complete them all in the time she gave us." I told her to just go and try her best, well about 20 minutes later she came out and said "I am so mad I only got 6 of the 8 finished."

I could see her frustration, and know from first hand experience teaching high school math, that some kids just take longer to solve equations and my girl is one of those kids.

What is the point in me telling you this? Well, when I emailed her teacher to ask if she could possibly have a few more minutes to finish the remaining problems we were denied the request….and the teacher's response is what keeps running through my head….and I quote, "This was a quiz that I have given other students in past years at the same level and they completed it with time to spare"

The more I thought about this the more upset I became because there is no way you can compare the 20-21 school year to previous years and to expect students to be at the same level.

We have been in school 127 days...but my daughter has only had 56 days of direct instruction via zoom from this teacher….there is no way these kids can be expected to be at the same place as students from previous years.

Our kids need to go back and they need to go back in person everyday. I have seen the proposed high school schedule and I plead with you to make that hard call and please choose the A and B model where both groups attend everyday and don't make us wait until 2 weeks after spring break.

How can a teacher gage if students are really understanding the material when all they see is a black screen? When I taught high school Algebra I knew that my kids were getting it not by looking at test or quiz scores but as I watched their body language and as I watched their pencils move across the paper. All of this is lost when teaching via zoom...and I know it's lost because I teach a class 4 days a week to high schoolers and try as I might only about ¼ of them ever have their screens on. What I wouldn't give to be back in a real classroom with them, to see their smiles when they get something right or see their eyes light up when they finally understand a concept.

Learning on zoom is just not the same, it's not the same for the teacher or the student...so much is being lost and not understood. Let's take the last two months of school and give our kids the education they deserve full time

Please bring them back and get rid of zoom for those of us who want to attend in person full time.

Marisa Brown

[redacted]

From: Cynthia Gilbert <cynthiagilbert@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 4:01 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Save our kids

I'm a pediatric hospital nurse and am working today. Wish I could be there as a nurse and parent of a senior.

I'm writing with a broken heart for our children.... in hopes that vusd and other school districts are listening. Put these kids back in school NOW! The Academy of Pediatrics has been advocating for this since mid last year.

Our children are DYING. Studies show that teen suicide rates are up 250%. Doctors and child psychologists estimate that number could even be low. We had 67 teens attempt suicide at ONE children's hospital in the US in 2019. In 2020, the same hospital had 108 attempts. The studies are crediting this terrible increase to covid issues, increased social isolation, teens losing self worth from not participating in sports/band/clubs, and increased issues at home.

This is California, a state that is supposed to be pro education. Where are the leaders that could care less about politics and their careers but are in education for the soul purpose of helping our children?

Why can't we think outside the box, put some canopies up, let the kids learn outside, spaced, with masks? Has no one thought of that? Why are unions with money/power even a factor in choosing what's right for our children, what will save their lives and their futures?

I sure hope and pray that our leaders will listen and advocate for our children's education, well-being, and their lives.

Above data is taken from aapublications and psychology today, reputable studies/publications.

Cyndi Gilbert, CPN, RN

[redacted]

From: Hani Geske <hanigeske@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 4:02 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Comments for board meeting on future school schedule.

Hello,

My name is Hani Geske. I am a parent of a 3rd and 5th grader at Will Rogers Elementary and eighth grader at DATA. Below is my feedback on our children's return to school.

Our children need to get back to full-time school as soon as possible. I am thankful that elementary school is going back fulltime after spring break but what about middle school and high school. Education at the middle school and high school is even more important for college and career preparation. We are creating a society of student who believe part-time work is sufficient. In addition, **working parents (including teachers) need kids to be at school so they can do their jobs properly and maintain their jobs.**

Schools need to go back full-time at the elementary, middle and high school. We **WILL NOT** keep our kids in VUSD system if school is not going back to full-time, **which includes being at school on Wednesdays.**

We further support that kids should be able to do zoom/online school when they are not able to attend school. This pandemic has not been Ventura's first experience when kids are out of school for a long period of time due to facility issues, weather challenges, fire etc. Many school were much more prepared for educating their student during the pandemic because they already had an online system in place for when their students are not able to attend school. VUSD needs to get to the 21st century and utilize its technology. What VUSD has learned from educating students in this pandemic should not be toss away but rather used to create a more robust education system that will cater to full-time in person learning with the option of online.

The boards responsibility is to properly educate our students. Please focus on that!

Best Regards,

Hani

[redacted]

From: Megan Andreasen <meganandreasen@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 4:10 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment for VUSD

Dear VUSD Board,
Thank you for all you are doing to get our kids back to school full time. We have 3 children. Two of our children are at Citrus Glen Elementary in 2nd and 3rd grade.
We just finished parent conferences this week and this was by far the year my kids struggled the most and it showed on their evaluations. Getting my kids to learn computer skills well enough to turn in assignments on Canvas has been a struggle. Keeping them motivated to get on Zoom has been rough. You can see the sadness and disappointment in their eyes when I tell them it's time to log in to Zoom.
Before COVID and distance learning my children did not spend much time on I-pads or computers and now it's a daily thing. There is good and bad things that come from young kids being on computers. Unfortunately my young girls have now been exposed to pornography as they are now getting comfortable navigating computers and internet. I wonder how many other kids and parents are finding this same issue. This makes me very sad and I have spent much time teaching them about what to do if they see things like that in the future and finding more computer safeguards. Distance learning has also caused isolation and depression.
Our children miss being in school full time and seeing their teachers and friends daily. We feel it is safe and hope to see our kids in school full time. If there has to be a half day please consider doing that on Friday so our kids can have more consistency in their weekly schedule. Wednesday's are not good for kids or working parents.
Thank you for your time,
Megan Andreasen
Get Outlook for iOS

[redacted]

From: Stephanie Coombs <sberglund19@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 4:15 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Back to School 5 days a week

Dear Ventura Unified District Board Members & Dr Rice,

Thank you for the effort and time you have been putting into negotiations this month. All of this will be worth while when our children are back in school and able to thrive with consistency. They need school five days a week including Wednesdays. My son is in Tk fully distance learning because his school (Elmhurst) did not offer hybrid. I thought it would be best to stick with his teacher, but now I wish I would have enrolled him at any school in the district that would offer him a spot for hybrid. He needs interaction with his teacher in person and is falling behind with basic skills that are so important to master at his age. It is a daily struggle to deal with his big emotions of not wanting to be on the computer. His teacher is doing her best, but this is no way for a five year old to learn how to read and write. My daughter is in Hybrid for 1st grade and although she is thrilled to go to school any chance she gets, switching from in person to zoom can be a challenge as we really can not get on a schedule that she understands or gets use to. She starts the day out upset when I tell her that it is a distance learning day and she can not see her friends and teacher. Going to school every day would make a world of difference to both of my kids. I ask that you please do all that you can to maximize the time and days spent in the classroom!

Thank You!
Stephanie Coombs

[redacted]

From: Darcie Keller <mrsdarciekeller@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 4:18 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Kindergarten

Hello,
I am writing this comment as a genuinely concerned parent about what will happen to our youth if schools do not reopen in the fall. My daughter will be in Kindergarten and we hope and pray for a real, genuine Kindergarten experience with hands on activities, social and emotional growth, and lessons in the classroom. What is being done to support our child and the many other children who need and thrive with in-person attention and instruction? We are hopeful for a full reopen for our elementary school students. Thank you.

[redacted]

From: Perez, Antoinette
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 4:21 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Concern with Proposed Changes

Dear Board of Trustees,

In effort to express my concerns with the ever-changing schedule this year, I ask that you consider some of the implications of the latest proposed changes.

Since November, I have been running a Small Group session for my students twice a week. Many of these students are in Group C but are comfortable with in-person instruction in a small-group setting. My Small Group sessions have proven successful and many students have relied on this support to understand complex concepts and skills that are difficult to comprehend through Distance Learning.

With the proposed changes, I would be forced to cancel my Small Group sessions as the time interferes with 5th/6th period. As a result, the students who really need additional support will no longer have that as many will remain in DL in Group C. I feel that as a district, we have put in a lot of work with these Small Groups, and now many of us will lose them. I know that many students are counting on Small Groups to continue the much needed support.

I don't know if this is something that you even have the power to control, but I felt compelled to address my concerns as I know I am not alone in this matter.

Thank you for your time,

Antoinette Perez
ELD, English 10 Honors, AP Lang
Buena High School

5670 Telegraph Road
Ventura CA 93003
[redacted]

For the future of every student

Ventura Unified SCHOOL DISTRICT | BUENA HIGH SCHOOL

[redacted]

From: Carrie Campbell <philcarrie805@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 4:22 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: Dariann Kobe; Colton Imming
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Parent Association Survey Results - Please read comments also
Attachments: Parent Survey Created By Parents of VUSD - Results of 329 responses as of 315PM on 32321.pdf; ATT00001.txt

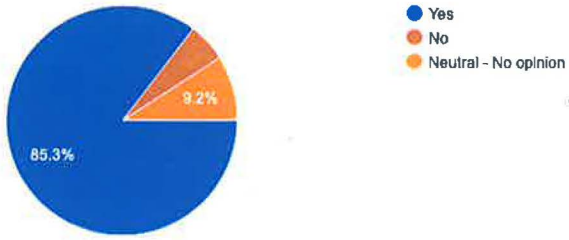
Greetings,

I would love to start out with thanking each of you for your hard work during this impossible year. Your hard work and dedication to our students is not going unnoticed. Please keep up the energy and know that you have a lot of parents supporting you and students that NEED you!

Attached is a survey that parents asked us to create. The survey has questions that parents wished had been asked on the previous survey that the district sent out. We send this out Sunday, March 21, at 10:15pm. In 35 hours we have had 329 responses and more keep coming in each hour. Please read the comments, as they are very powerful and encouraging.

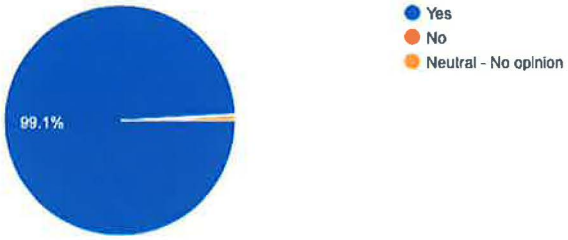
I want my student back in school for full time in-person learning (pre covid hours) for the remainder of this 2020/2021 school year.

327 responses



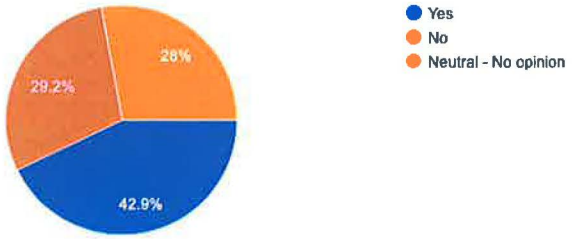
I want my student back in school for full time in-person learning (pre covid hours) for the (Fall) 2021/2022 school year.

327 responses



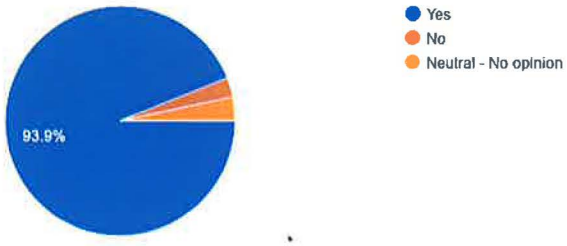
If VUSD is not offering full time, in person learning for the (Fall) 2021/2022 school year (pre covid schedule, with safety measures in place), I will unenroll my student from VUSD.

329 responses



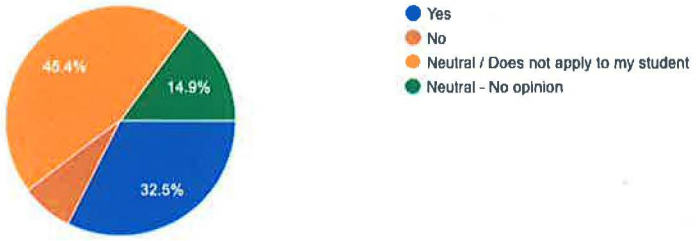
With a 4' social distancing rule in place, all students cannot return to full time, in person learning. I feel comfortable sending my student back to school with 3' social distancing, which was the standard ADA compliance in California prior to Covid, and is now recommended by the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the World Health Organization.

328 responses



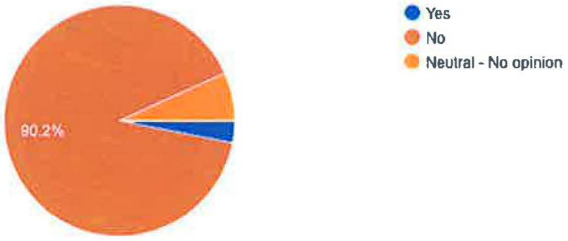
My student is currently in the distance only model, but if given the option, I would prefer full time in-person learning for the remainder of this school year.

302 responses



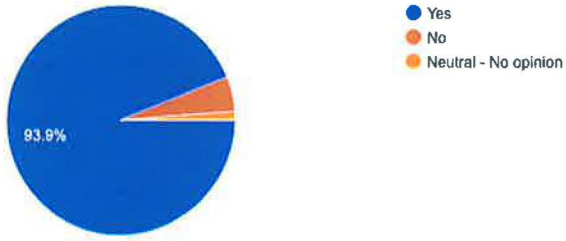
I believe the distance learning model has provided a comparable education to full time in-person learning.

325 responses



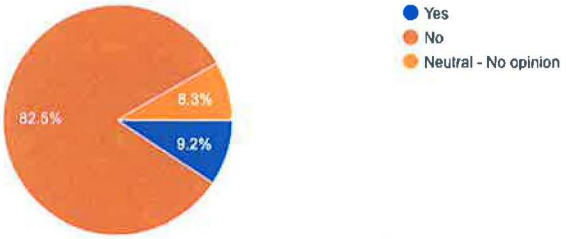
I would support an instructional model where my child returns to the classroom on a full-time, in-person schedule that includes one half-day during the week for reasonable teacher planning, (i.e. four full days and one half banking day per week, which was the pre-covid schedule).

328 responses



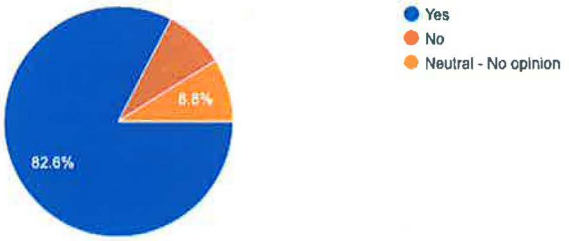
I support continuing to use Wednesdays as a non-instructional day, where only a 30-minute social-emotional lesson is offered on Zoom.

326 responses



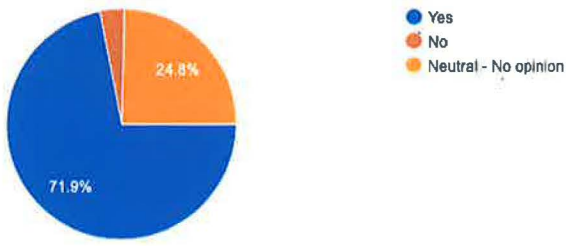
Wednesdays should be used for instructional purposes and SEL instruction should be incorporated into lesson plans throughout the week as it was pre-covid.

328 responses



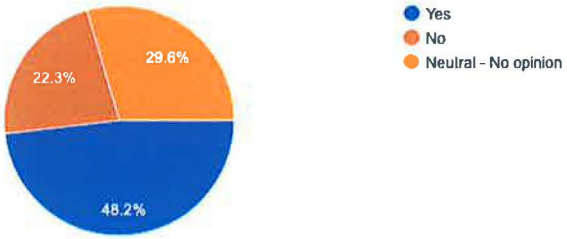
If VUSD needs to offer a Distance Learning only option for all grades, it should be separate from in-person instruction program, possibly at a single Distance Learning institution.

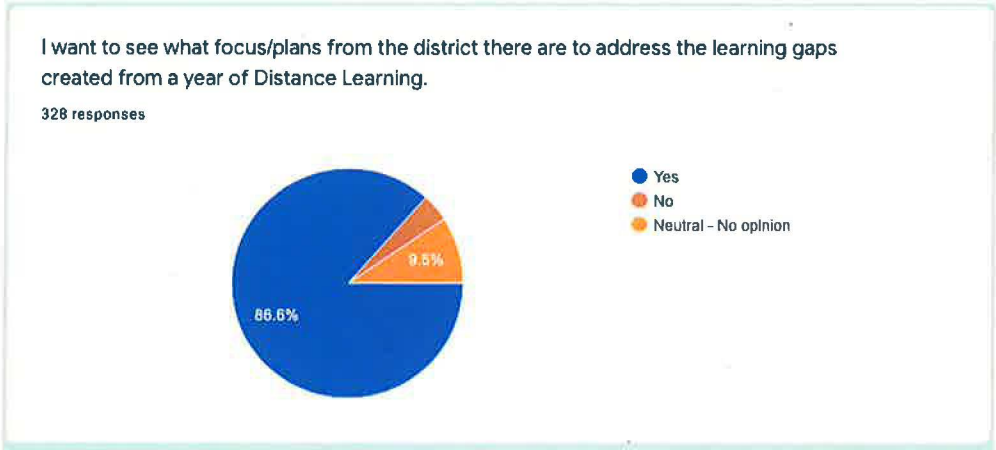
327 responses

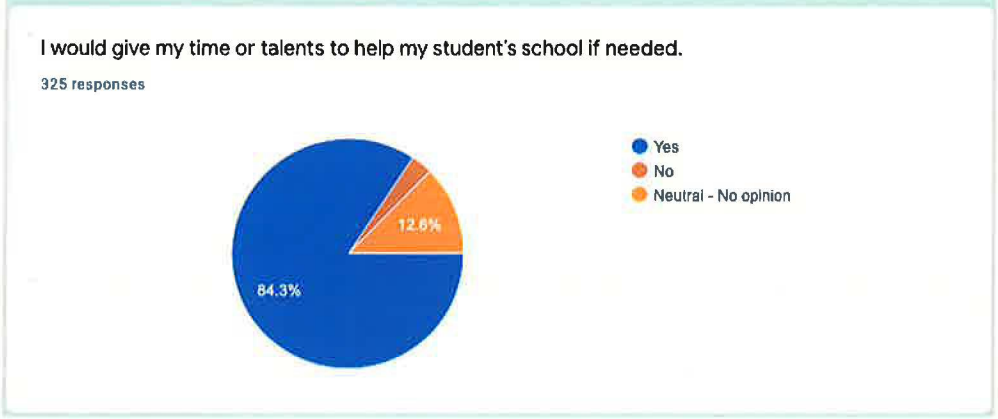


I believe Zoom during live classrooms should be an option going forward for all grade levels to help districts not lose money for absences and to allow my child to log in when they feel ill or are unable to join in person, similar to synchronous learning models at local private schools.

328 responses







ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR COMPLAINTS

- Ventura county is privileged but not all residents are privileged. We need a viable public school option for all (not just school for the privileged who can remove their kids from public school and switch to private schools &/or stay home to provide homeschooling). We will see a more notable division in our community, we must succeed!
- Graduations/Promotions... no more drive throughs!! Please plan now for 3foot safely distanced celebrations for our students! If not full time now.. at the very least, get rid of SEL and have AAABB and AABBB the following week for hybrid after spring break. Please address inequities between sports vs music/arts reopenings. (Also dance/cheer etc). Reopen school!
- Is it time to go back full time yet?!!
- I am a VUSD elementary school teacher and support all K-12 students back in school full time. I also feel that getting back to school for academics isn't enough. We need to open up groups, clubs, all sports, allow all supporting groups to attend and perform at games (dance, band, drum-line etc). Students must be connected and participate in their school community.
- My boys are currently in the hybrid program so I didn't answer the DI Question as it doesn't apply to them. Also, the other distance learning question didn't state if it was for now or Fall. For Fall, if there is distance learning it should be completely separate.
- Full time in-person should be the default from April on out. Distance learning option should be given for those who cannot or are afraid to attend in person. It should be either:or, no hybrid.
- Please get the kids back in to the classrooms, the science supports it. If my children are not in the classroom full time by Fall 2021, we will no longer be attending VUSD. Our volunteer hours and our donations will go elsewhere. Thank you.
- Thanks!
- Real graduations for class of 21!!

- My kids would get more out of Wednesday's having in person SEL activities than over zoom. However, if this is an issue because teachers need additional prep time, I'd be willing to do the zoom on Wednesday as a compromise. We LOVE our teachers and my kids need them in their lives! We are willing to volunteer to help them in any way we can. Classroom or materials prep? Classroom helper? (I'm a fully vaccinated nurse) just let us know how we can help make this happen.
- We have been distant learners for family reasons. Now that our family bubble is vaccinated we feel very comfortable returning full time. With the cdc changing the 6ft distance requirements to minimize it- we feel safe. We have noticed a big gap in our daughters social aspect in the past year. At this age we can not sacrifice her mental and social health anymore. Thank you
- Please get my kids back to in person school full time!
- I have 2 kiddos who are DL. If my current teacher was offered to go back to campus we would follow.
- Thank you!
- My kids aren't getting a good education the way things are right now. My teenage sons struggle to focus on zoom and get the help they need. My daughter is doing fine but it takes a lot of time I don't have to teach her the things that the teacher is not. I'm a single mom struggling to have a roof over my head and don't find it possible to go to college and teach my kids and have a job. My oldest son was pulled out of Buena to go to a charter school because he wasn't doing well online and now he can't go back to Buena because he is under credits. He was fine before pre Covid and now has to work even harder to go back to Buena. He deserves to go back and at least repeat the year. Kids should be offered to repeat the year if distance learning wasn't working for them.
- I do not support the 30 min SEL zoom. On Wednesdays, it would not let me click on the answer NO for that question.
- Thank you for all that you do for our kids, parents and community.
- I would support the concurrent model for older students but not primary. The DL learning center would be for next year? One of my children cannot go back for medical reasons and I would hate to see yet another change/less academic substance in the online offerings for her. If Canvas/GC aren't maintained to the same extent she will suffer. I think this year is still a balancing act. Where next fall we should be open back up to the norm (or hopefully with thoughtful changes that address some of the systemic issues in education)
- Special education needs should be at a minimum addressed and prioritized. There has been lack of access to small groups and the summer offerings will also not be fully available to kids of all needs.
- As of 3/31/21, my children will not be attending any Zoom school and will attend in person school only.
- 1. Thanks for putting this questionnaire together. It's clear and to the point unlike the previous one provided by VUSD and the teachers union.
- I feel like my son should ease back in to going back to school. 5 days a week full time would be hard for him if there is not transition in to it.
- Would like full time instruction with easing them back in in half days, been out for a year so it would be hard to go back full days
- I support all my three kids to go back to school full time. Distance learning is not working out for us. I fully support and hope that schools re-open full time 5 days a week.
- I would like my kids to be back to in person school full time
- I answered some of the DL questions the way I did because we have been lucky to have an AMAZING teacher this year. If that were not the case my responses may have been different.
- Bring the kids back to school!
- Our kids are suffering the most. Enough is enough. The SEL was NOT helpful at all except when teachers play games with the kids and it was fun and kids could interact. NOT the videos! We needed and need more interaction!!!!!!!!

- Thank you for your efforts! Nobody wants anybody to get sick; however, I know we can keep safety measures in place and still get all kids back to full time-it's been done-a lot!
- My daughter is in special education where class sizes and instruction can differ from mainstream.
- Please send out a survey asking parents to choose only on-line or in-person, this way we will know the amount of kids that will be full time in-person and we may be able to make changes so all these kids can be in person!
- This seems all or nothing many of us haven't even had the option for hybrid yet. I want to see hybrid at least now moving towards full by fall
- Wednesday's SEL is a waste of time. The kids don't even pay attention and they are still unable to cope with their feelings of solitude and need to be with their peers. Kids do a better job with education when they have a teacher available to them in person. It builds a relationship and not just a dark screen to teach to. Please send our children back to school full time where teachers and staff can get vaccinated and everyone still can wear masks. I have a student in each level of school and their education is suffering.
- Would like full time instruction with easing them back in in half days, been out for a year so it would be hard to go back full days
- I believe that our two teachers 1st and 3rd grade have done a tremendous job given the circumstances. But frankly distance learning gets a D- in my book. My daughter is an ICU nurse working nights and a single mom. Just all the school stuff we have to lug back and forth between our two homes and trying to make sure we both are getting all the communications from the teachers and staff. Remind, direct emails, parent square, and the kids gmail. But even more important, it breaks my heart to see how much the kids are suffering. They desperately need and want to go back to school full time.
- School needs to be back in person full time. My wife and I are first responders and we haven't stopped working but now we have to pay for child care instead of our kids being in school. They should be back in school now because it's the best thing for our kids. Not because the state is throwing money at the districts. If Vusd does not go back to in person full time school we will consider private school. But that is expensive. I don't care about the social distancing with kids. Just wear masks for the time being. The question about if our kids are getting a comparable education..... is that a joke? They are not getting close to the education they should be getting. My wife and I are not qualified to teach our kids. That's what the teachers should be doing. I don't know much about the time for teachers to plan and I don't really care what Wednesdays are for. Just as long as they are back in person. The district has done the best they can. The teachers union needs to get the teachers back into the classrooms ASAP. My wife and I have worked constantly around Covid patients without any issues or illness.
- Just try to go back as normal as possible. :)
- Open the schools full time!
- These questions more directly address the issues of parents than the previous survey sent out by VUSD which included misleading questions seemingly designed to generate data to support an specific agenda.
- I felt the zoom teaching and being on a computer multiple hours a day hurt my children more than help so my husband and I felt we had no options but to completely unenroll our children for 20-21. We are very big supporters of VUSD but felt the online/zoom instruction was doing more harm than good.
- If Covid positive numbers increase again at surge numbers, of course I would prioritize the safety of our students and teachers.
- Great job to everyone during these crazy times!
- It is time to get students back in school full time. The dangers and downsides to keeping them at home clearly out weigh the known risks of CV19. Truckers, grocery store workers, first responders and many other professions have worked through the entire pandemic. Teachers are essential workers. It is time to put the kids first and get them back into classrooms full time. There is no substitute for that, including zoom.

- These are much better questions
- These questions are spot on
- I am not against vaccines but if the district is going to mandate that kids receive the vaccine, then ALL students should have ALL vaccines. No more waivers!
- The default should be in person full-time school. Hybrid not an option.
- My kids will not return to VUSD until the mask mandate is lifted, otherwise I will pull all of them from VUSD .
- Thank you for giving us a voice! And leaving a space for comments!!!
- Thank you ALL!!!
- Thank you!!! You guys rock!!!
- I would like to see parents sitting at the table with decision-makers, as opposed to being asked to fill out surveys and then told what has been decided with minimal parental input.
- I want my child back to full time in person schooling
- Zooms and online schooling does not work for middle school children their brains cannot multitask at the level zooms/online schooling need them to. We are setting our kids up for failure by continuing to zoom. Please send our middle school children back to school they need to interact with each other and with their teachers in person.
- Thanks to everyone for your hard work and efforts over the past year!
- Thank you for working on trying to get the kids back to school full time!
- Thank you for putting this together. Please let me know if you need additional support to get our kids back in school! I'd be willing to help. (310) 948-0954
- Thank you!!
- If education is essential, then teachers are essential. Get back to work!
- Thank you!
- Open the schools up Full Time!
- These kids are being hurt by not being in school. We don't know the long term affects, but It's not going to be good.
- This online schooling has been a huge challenge for my children and they have all done worse and many of the teachers do not teach and grading is not consistent, plus too much homework. Teachers are not being held accountable for teaching.
- Make sure you are parenting as hard as you are complaining.
- I answered no to the 4.5 days of instruction since my child is in high school and he should be in school 5 days a week.
- My son is in band and will be a senior so I may not unenroll him if schools do not return full time in the fall but if he were any younger, I most definitely would put him in private school.
- I left out that we did enroll our freshman daughter in private school and she has been back hybrid since January 1 and full time all grades since March 1. If my son was any younger, we would have pulled him out as well.
- There should be NO standardized testing in this 2020-21 school year of any kind.
- It is time to get all of our kids back in school full time!! Teachers are being vaccinated so there should be no more fear. By the time school starts, every adult who wants to be vaccinated should be fully vaccinated. Kids are hardly getting covid, and if they do test positive, are either asymptomatic or have very few symptoms. We should be so grateful they are not dying from covid! Look at the science!! Now let's let our kids be kids and stop living in fear! The solution has become far worse than the problem. Nobody is fighting for our kids. They've become political pawns and it's disgusting to watch. The teachers union is deplorable and should be ashamed of themselves. Open our schools up!
- All students who want to distance learn should state that, and a market should be made at either homestead or independent school to support any teachers who might want the same. All teachers who want to continue distance learning need to leave their current "home schools" and apply for positions at Homestead or Independent Studies.
- Make sure you are parenting as hard as you are complaining.
- A big NO to Wednesday's as an SEL day

- Thank you for creating this survey! Our district should be looking at the districts that have successfully transferred back to in person learning to model our plan after. It is not as complicated as they're making it!
- Compliments to the parents for creating a survey that actually answers the concerns we have!
- I do help at the school and have helped in the past it will be great to see more parents "step up". As far as a separate distance learning model goes it would have to be exactly aligned with in class instruction so the quarantined students do not fall behind and that's why I think it better to integrate the model with class instruction, ie live video feed or pre recorded material shared with both in person and distance learning students this is how my nieces school does it Desoto Central HS, MS 4 day week full school day and bank day Friday (just got this for the prep needed)
- What do I want for my children? Stability. Consistency. I feel like every few weeks the schedule changes. The schedule changes are emotionally draining for our whole family and it seems to take a few weeks for us to adjust, basically just in time for another change. THAT has been difficult, draining and trying. I want to tell them that next school year will be so much closer to normal. They'll be most likely wearing masks but they'll be in school five days a week just as they've known, four full days and a banking day/half day. I also want to give all of our amazing VUSD teachers a true act integrity to all of the spoken "you all are heros" and so on that was said last year. They ARE heros. These teachers have changed how they teach, adjusted and completely redone lesson plans more times than anyone can count. They have worked through fall break, they worked through winter break, they help parents in the evening and on weekends. They have literally been on call and available to their students nonstop for a year. Our teachers are parents themselves. Our teachers are sons and daughters to elderly parents themselves and have been taking care of/missing/fearful for their health as well. Our teachers are spouses who are emotionally drained and needed to both recharge and connect at the same time too. Our teachers have given and given and given. It breaks my heart to hear so many parents turn their backs and speak such ugliness abut the very same teachers they called heros just months ago. To change everything again- to ask these exhausted in every sense of the word- humans to once again rework everything for 8 weeks of school. 8 weeks. It feels, like a complete slap in the face. It feels like a complete disregard for all of the work these teachers have done. Just do something else now... go go. With a wave of our hand and noses in the air.
- Teachers who are not comfortable returning to the classroom should apply to be a teacher at HomeStead or Independent Studies.
- I believe the pre COVID schedule should be adjusted. After having my kids home for a year I have seen the great benefit of more free time to play, create, cook, etc. These home economics, art, gardening, creative free play times are crucial for these kids and should be incorporated. Learning can absolutely be done in a few hours with an equal amount of time spent with life and emotional skills. They need way more time than 30 min a week learning social/emotional therapy type lessons.
- Just try to go back as normal as possible. :)
- This past year has shown that there is an extreme lack of concern on the part of vusd and the unions for children and their wellbeing. The fact that private schools and other states have been able to operate and continue to provide in person instruction for students without issue is very telling. The teachers who have pushed to return to normal instruction and have true concern for ending this nonsense should be applauded. If any teacher is not comfortable providing this environment for the kids they should be fired immediately.
- I am hopeful for a full return to in person learning for my soon to be Kindergartener. Thank you!
- I would appreciate decisions soon. In the board meeting at the latest. Planning for all families will be needed with a new schedule that we were supposed to have last week. We cannot adjust our schedules until they confirm theirs. Thank you for all the hard work and time!!
- My son needs to be back in a proper classroom with real learning and on the field with his cheer squad.
- Appreciate your wanting our opinions

- We love our schools and teachers, please help our kids go back! School is such a big part of their lives and it's been over a year. It's time to go back.
- I appreciate the board's efforts and work. I believe K-5 v MS v HS should be viewed separately due to age ranges and how COVID effects them differently. That being said, having a K-5 child, I believe K-5 should be back full time ASAP due to the science of COVID and their age group and the social emotional struggles they have been having, not to mention the key developmental time they are missing trying to learn from home via zoom.
- My child has had consistency and an amazing teacher. I want him to stay in his distance learning class for the remainder of the year.
- I filled out twice, I have twins at Cabrillo
- These questions are very direct and to the point. Very much appreciated
- My kids have severely suffered emotionally and academically this year.
- These questions are direct and straight forward. Very much appreciated.
- Full time and in person is what I want to see
- I don't feel that my kids are safe going full time all days of the week with full classes. Maybe if class sizes were smaller and had less kids per class, the kids and staff would be safer. We need to not let our guard down and take baby steps to get back. I feel like this full time return is too soon.
- Students are not learning to retain information. They have learned how to look up answers on google instead. District may want to consider how to make up for this lost year.
- They've lost a year of education. Only thing they've learned is how to look things up on google.
- Let's use the federal funds received for permanent smaller class sizes.
- Poinsettia has really dropped the ball on equity when it comes to offering comparable programs (such as in-person reading intervention and other small group opportunities). My child NEEDS this! We were told by the school board several months ago that all schools, not just some, need to offer these programs to be equitable. We have been waiting ALL school year and have been offered nothing at Poinsettia. Please communicate this to the superintendent and the board. POINSETTIA'S principal needs be an equitable leader.
- Full time should be our only option. The science says it's safe, vaccines were offered to teachers. What are we waiting for??
- Although I feel that distance learning was descent for my kids, it's not in person learning. I feel a lot was lost! I feel very strongly about them returning full time for this coming fall. 21-22
- Kids need to be on campus full time and next year no mask required they need to live a normal life socializing with kids and playing ! I hate the fact that they are so robotic at school. Super sad ! Get them back on campus ASAP full time no more avoiding the fact life must continue! Teachers need to get back to work. If employees can work at target teachers can get back to work . If they feel it's unsafe they should find a new profession!
- They simply need to be back in school full-time, just as they were before covid. And there needs to be a plan to catch them up from a year of very interrupted, not ideal learning.
- Keep up the good work!!!
- I would like to see how VUSD is working to minimize disruptions regardless of how we move forward. Our experience this year has been unnecessarily bad. I believe this was due to organizational failure that during crisis may be forgivable but moving forward it is not. I have considered moving my child out of VUSD but I prefer not to.
- I know this is an unprecedented year. I'm so very grateful for all of the time our VUSD Teachers, staff, and administrators have taken to make this year the best it could be for our kids
- Allow volunteers on-site to support teachers. With appropriate Covid precautions and other screenings. The district is losing key resources. Utilize outdoor space and programs- the lack of will Rogers space and programs is a shame. Wednesday's should be instructional days or non contact days. Instructional is preferred. Procuring a half hour of child care for a half hour class or requiring families to wait around to meet the class requirement is unrealistic. Please gl back full time. The distance learning is wearing on even the most engaged of kids. And those in trying circumstances are falling further and further behind.

[redacted]

From: Chris Anderson <vafbcop@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 4:28 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment for the board meeting with regards to opening public schools full time

Dear Board Members, Superintendent, Principals, Teachers and Parents,

Throughout the history of our country, we have met with a variety of difficult circumstances. One thing that has always defined us is our willingness to put duty and responsibility before our personal desires. During this pandemic we have asked many people to assume the risk of being out in public to ensure our communities could continue to function. We termed these people "Essential Workers". Most of these people never thought their jobs would put them at a greater risk but they continued to serve us anyway.

We now have enough information and protocols to ensure that in person learning can be accomplished with minimal risk to either students or teachers. The teacher's union used in person learning as a tool in order to push to the front of the line for vaccinations. Now that teachers have been vaccinated we cannot allow the unions to remove the teachers from their duty to our communities. For better or worse, we have built our communities around our children spending most of their weekdays at school. Can we ask our First Responders, Medical, City, and other workers to continue providing their services while their children's emotional and educational welfare is ignored? What would happen if Doctors, Nurses and Therapists stopped going to work in order to stay home and teach their children? We have done what was necessary to limit the loss of life while we flattened the curve, learned what we could about Covid-19 and even come out with a vaccination. Our children NEED to learn how to interact with both peers and people in positions of authority. School is so much more than just the subjects they learn. Please vote to open full time in person learning for the welfare of our children.

Thank you for your time,
Chris

[redacted]

From: Downey, Kevin
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 4:23 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment for 3/23/21

Good evening,

My name is Kevin Downey, and I teach World History, 12th Grade English, and Choir at Buena High School. I am very excited to re-open our schools. I just wanted to take some time today to discuss some details with the district, board, and community as we work to re-open.

Cameras On Campaign:
- Please support the Cameras On campaign. While providing for exceptions for certain students in need, requiring students to turn on cameras will help teachers in their mission to help students learn and grow, and will help avoid feelings of loneliness in our students who can't return in-person.
- If students are concerned about being bullied for turning on their cameras, then perhaps we need to do more to ensure our students that online bullying will not be tolerated, and will be disciplined to the fullest extent possible.

Equity:
As we re-open, many classes will no longer be able to provide an equitable education for students who will remain in distance learning. Classes that are required to be held outside may not have access to the internet (such as band/choir), so those classes will not be able to provide live-instruction on Zoom for students who can't come to school. In other words, Distance Learning students in group C will not be receiving ANY live teaching anymore in those classes, and instead will be given asynchronous content (whereas NOW they get two hours of live instruction per week).

Also, various science and shop-like classes will engage with students with equipment in the room, but will not be able to provide equitable instruction for students at home. In other words, reopening in hybrid WILL be better for many students who come to school, but WORSE for many students who do not. I share this because I fear that a lot of people may not fully understand how children may be negatively impacted because they will not be receiving the same quality or amount of live instruction as students who do return.

Schedules:
I know schedules are being negotiated right now, but I hope that we can create a schedule that does not decrease the amount of minutes of instruction that students receive each week. Right now, students currently receive 240-300 minutes of instruction per class each week (with 120 of those minutes being live, and 120-180 being asynchronous). As we look to change the schedule, please make sure that each block period is long enough to be equivalent to two "regular" class periods of around 50-ish minutes long, so students are not missing out on content standards and time for skill-building. If each block is less than 100 minutes or so (which would be equivalent to two "normal" class periods), then teachers will not have time to cover certain parts of their curriculum, such as having time in a history class to include all of the important historical events that we normally teach, up to and including the world post-9/11.

Closing:

Thank you for hearing me out as I process all of the changes that are occurring. Again, I look forward to reopening schools for our students, and I just hope that we do everything we can to encourage students to turn on their cameras, to preserve instructional minutes, and to provide the most equitable instruction possible for all students.

Sincerely,

Kevin Downey
Social Science/English/Choir Teacher
[redacted]

Buena High School
5670 Telegraph Road
Ventura CA 93003
[redacted]

For the future of every student

Ventura Unified SCHOOL DISTRICT | BUENA HIGH SCHOOL