VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
March 9, 2021
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 9, 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 special Board meeting was made available through the Ventura Adult and Continuing 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 Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Mr. Matt Almaraz and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve as Amended the agenda, pulling item 14.b to be added onto the next board meeting agenda on March 23, 2021 as a conference/action item.

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 Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg 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 Mr. Matt Almaraz and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the public employment/appointment of Dr. Antonio Castro as the new Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services.

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 gave kudos to our athletes, especially the water polo teams and the cross country teams who have recently began competing. Dr. Rice acknowledged our unprecedented year and thanked the athletes for hanging in there.

Dr. Rice also thanked the music students and teachers for their dedication and patience. He shared that we recently received guidance that will allow us to resume in person music classes once secondary students return on April 12, 2021. Dr. Rice added that the value music brings to our students in our community cannot be overstated.

Student Board Members Ms. Elizabeth Ferris representing Foothill High School and Ms. Carys Garvey representing El Camino, gave updates on the exciting things happening at their school. Ms. Ferris also took a moment to apologize and clarify a comment she made during the February 9, 2021 board meeting. While discussing efforts to discuss Black History month, Ms. Ferris used the phrase "caused a ruckus" which may have confused or hurt some people. Ms. Ferris stated that she in no way intended to be hurtful. She shared that the conversations that were had in her ASB class about approaching the celebration of Black History Month were done mindfully, thoughtfully, and respectfully.

Correspondence

None.

Public Comments (84)

The following individuals gave a public comment via e-mail or live via Zoom* regarding: returning students to fulltime in-person instruction; adding additional instructional hours by eliminating SEL Wednesdays and alternating between Hybrid Group A and Group B; requesting that music students be allowed to return to in-person classes beginning April 1; sharing concerns about reopening; requesting smaller class sizes for SPED students and a longer ESY program; thanking the Board for allowing live public comment; concerns about reducing the social distancing requirement from 6' to 4' and for eliminating SEL Wednesdays; for VUSD to be more innovative; and in favor of reopening safely keeping the current 6 feet social distancing guidelines and SEL Wednesdays so that teachers have the time to meet the needs of the students.

Erin Reed	Liz Ortiz	Beth & Shawn Harris	Dariann Kobe
Jessica Easterly & Family	Lisa Bondy	Ellen Laber	Merideth Ikeda
Andi Kish	Stefanie Hathaway	Alena Chauhan	Kristen Nielson
Timur Taluy	Michelle Davidson	Lisa Williams	Erin Reed
Rafael Gonzalez	Susie Guzman	Jeff Mohror	Pat Stepler
Rebecca Martinez & Family	Joan Bennett	Bonnie Galindo	Joel Bennett
Tony Plezakowski	Lindsay Streufert	Dariann & Nick Kobe	Stephanie Coombs
Michael Dean	Teya DeBlauw	Deanna & Ethan Gray	Kate Shanahan
Loren & Christoph Haar	Erin Szakos	Ashley Stutzman	Keely Henkel
Marisa Brown	Kelly Hanighen-Lynch	Jeff Coombs	Kevin Downey
Lacie Tarrant	Olivia Marsdin	Natalie Oman	Lea Martinez
Jennifer Montoya	Cassie Guerri	Jocelyn Coon	Julie Heidrick
Noelle Davis	Melyssa Noren	Elizabeth Walker Martinez	Christal Anderson
Jena Burdick	Carrie Coffman	Jason Meyer	Andrea Labbe
Chad Anderson	Adriana Ebell	Wren Powers	Gordhan Family
Jessica Gardner	Erica Walker	Jessica St. Pierre	Noel Jordan
Diana Hightland	Johnny Kubelka	Michael Cary	Brooke Martinez
Darcey Duffy*	Parker Duffy*	Annette Walters*	Su-Lin Rubalcava*
Ashley Pope*	Ellen Laber*	Timur Taluy*	Jenna White*
Rhyan Burrows*	Lauren Taluy*	Christal Anderson*	Marisa Brown*

Alyssa Anderson*	Jessica Easterly*	Dan Nelson*	Lyndsey

CONFERENCE - SUPERINTENDENT

14.a **California Legislative Update**

Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice gave an update on Assembly Bill 86 (AB 86) which was signed into law on March 5, 2021. The intent of AB 86, is that local educational agencies offer in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible. AB 86 sets forth priority groups of pupils including those at-risk of neglect or abuse, homeless, foster, EL, without access to technology and disengaged. Key provisions of AB 86 include: provides funding to support schools; established "Safe Schools for all Team"; funds the California for Educational Excellence to support school site and district efforts to provide in-person instruction; establishes safety protocols; and sets in place reporting requirements.

AB 86 funding includes a total of $6.557 billion dollars, with $4.557 billion designated for learning loss and student support activities through August 2022, and $2.0 billion for supporting efforts to incorporate in-person instruction. Dr. Rice shared that VUSD will receive 10 million and five millions of that money respectively and shared allowable expenditures for each category. Beginning April 1, 2021 through May 15, 2021, there is a 1% penalty per day for not offering in-person instruction. For VUSD, this equates to $150,000 per day. Stipulations of AB 86 include that schools must remain open to in-person instruction through the end of the 2021 school year and in-person instruction must be offered to all K-6 students and in at least one full grade beyond grade 6. Ten percent of the funding is allocated to hiring and retaining para educators to support EL and SPED students. There is also a 15% limit on expenditures to support Distance Learning students. AB 86 stipulates that a student support/learning loss mitigation plan be developed by June 1, 2021 and include parent and employee input.

AB 86 impacts all VUSD schools. In order to offer in-person instruction "to the greatest extent possible" so that Hybrid instruction can count as "in-person instruction" we need to do the following:

- Look at repurposing all days of the week that could possibly serve as in-person learning days.
- Reduce social distancing to 4' where needed in order to maximize students that can attend safely; now allowed by the California Department of Public Health and Ventura County Public Health (teachers will stay at the current 6' social distancing requirement).
- Maximize our facilities use.
- Require implementation by April 1, 2021.
- Maintain in-person instruction for the remainder of the year.

Dr. Rice shared that Elementary Schools will return to full-time in-person instruction for all students Tk-5 beginning April 12, 2021; a DL only option will still be available. VUSD will be working on replacing larger desks/furniture and to identify additional instructional spaces to serve as classrooms.

Dr. Rice shared that Secondary Schools will return to in-person Hybrid instruction for all students in middle and high schools beginning on April 12, 2021, with a DL concurrent instruction option available. Orientation days will be held on March 31, 2021 and April 1, 2021. Some secondary instructional settings that may be able to return to full-time instruction include Special Education (self-contained classrooms), Alternative Education (Pacific High School, El Camino, Homestead, and MSO), and after hour’s classes with small class size and larger rooms (Example: CTE).

CONFERENCE - EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

15.a California State Seal of Civic Engagement and Recommendation for Resolution

Dr. Greg Bayless, Director, Secondary Curriculum and Instruction, gave a quick review of Assembly Bill 24 (AB 24), which was passed in 2017. AB 24 stated that the State Board of Education needed to construct criteria for districts to use as guidelines to construct their own local, district specific guidelines, for graduating seniors to earn a state seal of civic engagement by January 1, 2020. The State Board identified five global criteria that districts then use to create a group of stakeholders (teachers, parents, community members) who can then give input on how these criteria can be fulfilled by the student. The criteria are:

- Be engaged in academic work in a productive way.

- Demonstrate a competent understanding of United States and California constitutions; functions of governance of local governments; tribal government structures and organizations; the role of the citizen in a constitutional democracy; and democratic principles, concepts, and processes.
- Participate in one or more informed civic engagement project(s) that address real-world problems, consider varies responses, take action, and reflect on efforts.
- Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions through self-reflection.
- Exhibit character traits that reflect civic-mindedness and a commitment to positively impact the classroom, school, community and/or society.

VUSD's Curriculum and Instruction recommends:

1. Entertain a resolution outlining the District's commitment to participate in the CA State Seal of Civic Engagement initiative.
2. Launch a committee of stakeholders to propose local/VUSD eligibility criteria for earning a CA State Seal of Civic Engagement.

There was consensus with the Board to move forward with the resolution and to bring it back at our next regular school board meeting on March 23, 2021. The Board suggested that the committee also include students.

CONFERENCE - BUSINESS SERVICES

16.a 2020-21 Second Interim Financial Report and Presentation (Action Requested)

Ms. Anna Campbell, Director of Budget and Finance, gave an overview of the Second Interim Financial Report for the General Fund, discussed the assumptions used for projections, and requested the Board adopt a positive certification. Ms. Campbell noted that the the 15 million dollars that we will be receiving from AB 86 has not yet been added to these calculations as it was a recent development. Currently, there continues to be projected reductions in our out years due to declining enrollment and changes in our operating costs.

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Mr. Matt Almaraz and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the positive certification of the 2020-21 Second Interim Financial Report.

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

CONFERENCE - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated

17.a Presentation/Approval of Resolution #21-04 Regarding Release of Certificated Temporary Employees for the 2021-2022 School Year (Action Requested)

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve Resolution #21- 04 regarding the release of certificated temporary employees for the 2021-2022 school year.

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 5 – 0 to approve consent items #18-22 as presented.

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

CONSENT- EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

18.a Consideration for Disposal of Obsolete High School Science Curriculum

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated

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

19.b Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Substitute Teachers for the 2020-21 School Year

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

19.d Resolution Pursuant to Education Code Section 44951. - Certificated Management

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Classified

20.a Classified Personnel Changes

20.b Classified Position Change

20.c Release of Probationary Classified Employee

CONSENT - BUSINESS SERVICES

21.a Document Tracking Services 21-22

21.b Ratification of Final Settlement Agreement and Release of All Claims No. SG202102

21.c Checks for February 2021

21.d Ratification of Purchase Orders (February 12, 2021 to February 23, 2021)

CONSENT - SUPERINTENDENT

22.a Consideration of Board Meeting Minutes

BOARD REPORTS

Trustee Dr. Jerry Dannenberg shared that he attended El Camino's "Our Planet" program and really enjoyed it. Dr. Dannenberg participated in the Teacher of the Month program at Poinsettia Elementary for teacher Ms. Teresa Lui. He attended the District Webinar on Secondary Reopening and shared that it could be found on the website for those who may have missed it. Last Friday he participated in the AVID Student Mentoring Program and joined in the fun car parade at Atlas celebrating it becoming our next K-8 school.

Trustee Amy Callahan participated in Reading Across America at Lincoln Elementary School in Mr. Bakody's fifth grade class. Ms. Callahan shared that it is Women's History Month and that International Women's Day was celebrated yesterday. She attended the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting. Ms. Callahan thanked Dr. Rice and staff for their amazing job at the Secondary Reopening Webinar. Lastly, Ms. Callahan will be meeting with Justice in the Classroom on education equity tomorrow, March 10.

Trustee Sabrena Rodriguez shared that she attended the Ethnic and Social Justice Steering Committee where they discussed the possible delay in the implementation of the graduation requirement based on this past year with COVID; she thanked Dr. Bayless and Dr. Molinar for leading the conversation around that. Ms. Rodriguez attended the AVID mentoring session where they discussed resumes and thank you notes. This morning she attended the CSBA webinar about AB 86, which was a two hour conversation around the legal aspects of the new law. Last week Ms. Rodriguez attended the PAC meeting where they discussed Ventura Education Partnership's health and Wellness Grants for individual teachers funded by the Mountain to Beach Marathon and some changes that will be happening with our GATE testing and hopes that GATE testing will be brought back as a board agenda item. Ms. Rodriguez also participated in Reading Across America at Lincoln Elementary and shared that she loves celebrating literacy. She watched the Special Education Department Advisory Committee meeting and would encourage a Board representative on that committee in the future. Last week she attended a Ventura County School Board Association Executive Committee Meeting and shared that there will be an upcoming meeting on April 16 regarding Learning Loss Remediation. This morning, Ms. Rodriguez attended a CSBA Climate Change Task Force Meeting and will be bringing potential policies to school districts throughout the state for their

consideration. Lastly, she was appointed by Supervisor LeVere to join the Community Action of Ventura County Committee and shared that they have funds to help people weatherize their homes and to help pay for utility bills during COVID. Ms. Rodriguez would be happy to share information with anyone who is interested.

Mr. Matt Almaraz shared that he attended the Teacher of the Month celebration at Poinsettia Elementary. Earlier today he had a meeting with Justice in the Classroom. Mr. Almaraz attended three athletic committee meetings and reported that they are doing an amazing job. Mr. Almaraz gave a shout out to Dr. Davis, Dr. Bayless, the Athletic Directors, all the Principals, and especially to Mr. Eric Reynolds. Mr. Almaraz also attended the Secondary Reopening Webinar and shared that it was online if anyone missed it. Mr. Almaraz took part in the "Carona-Can't" video campaign through Ventura High School's ASB. Lastly, he participated in the El Camino High School's "Our-Planet" campaign.

Trustee Velma Lomax attended the Teacher of the Month Celebration at Poinsettia Elementary. Ms. Lomax participated in the Reading Across America at Portola Elementary on SEL Wednesday and she was excited to see that there was over 120 participants. She also attended the Secondary Reopening Webinar last week. Ms. Lomax shared that she had the honor of judging videos last week for "VUSD Got Skills," where students submitted a 20-second video sharing CTE pathways and shared that they were amazing. Ms. Lomax thanked Dr. Rickard for allowing her to participate in that. Next Tuesday night, March 16 at 6:00 p.m., the Navy is having their Grant Funding Webinar; any one wishing to apply must attend. If you need additional information you can reach out to Dr. Rickard or Ms. Lomax. Lastly, the Department of Defense (DOD) partnered with First Now and there are now Legos for grades TK through Middle School.

COMING EVENTS

- Class of 2021 Survey for Seniors and their Families – Deadline Tonight at 11:59 p.m.
- Teacher of the Month Celebrations:
  - March 11 at 3:00 p.m. – Loma Vista Elementary
  - March 18 at 3:00 p.m. – Portola Elementary
- African American Parent Committee Meeting March 17 at 5:30 p.m.
- LCAP Advisory Committee Meeting March 24 at 8:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.
- Groundbreaking Ceremony at Sa'aliyas Ranch March 25 at 3:00 p.m.
- DELAC Meeting March 25, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.
- Special Education District Advisory Committee (SEDAC) Meeting March 26 at 9:00 a.m.
- Board Holiday April 2- District Closed
- Spring Break: April 5- April 9 - No School
- Secondary School Reopening April 1

FUTURE BOARD ITEMS

- Student Learning Loss/Acceleration - April
- Board Policies Update - April/May
- Mental Health and Counseling Services - March 23
- Distance Learning Protocols - March 23
- Human Resources Update - May
- Fall Reopening Update - TBD
- Facilities Update - July

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

- Trustee Callahan shared that she would like to have the the Special Study Session on Learning Loss sooner, rather than later.
- Trustee Rodriguez would like to know what the reopening plans are for the fall and would like it to be agendized. There was board consensus and it was suggested to have it as a special study session.
- Trustee Almaraz would like to have information in a Friday Letter regarding transportation as we open up our schools. He asked specifically if we have any needs and if we have enough employees.
- Trustee Lomax requested that we look into ways to help Ventura High School's Snack Bar, that has been used by many in our community and is in need of some repairs. Ms. Lomax would like this to be agendized. There was board consensus to agendize this item at a future board meeting preferably in the summer.

CLOSED SESSION

There was no need to return to closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to adjourn the meeting at 10:56 p.m. to the next Regular Board Meeting to be held at 7:00 p.m. on March 23, 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: Erin Reed <emstansbury@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 4:24 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL.SENDER- Concerned parent plea
Attachments: IMG_20210308_0001.pdf; IMG_20210308_0002.pdf

Please see attached letter to be addressed at VUSD Board Meeting March 9, 2021.

Thank you for your consideration..

Erin Reed

Dear Ventura Unified School District Board Members,

First, I would like to thank you for all the work you have done so far to get our students back to in person learning. I understand and appreciate that there have been so many unknowns this past year as I myself am an essential worker in the healthcare field. I go into 7 strangers home everyday for an hour each and see multigenerational households where nobody understands the importance of masking I truly do "get it". This has made my job more difficult just as it has for the teachers; however, I have continued working throughout this pandemic, followed all safely guidelines and recommendations, have not gotten Covid and am urging you to PLEASE get our kids back to school full time! Honestly, I was petrified to go to the grocery store the first few times when this began; however, we have so much more knowledge about transmission and prevention now that I don't understand how picking out fruit that 100's of people have touched at the grocery store is less risky than 20 students in a classroom, wearing masks, behind a teacher with plexi glass dividing them? I am writing this letter on behalf of my family and also those families who feel the same but are unable to voice their concerns.

Since Ventura County Public Health considers 4' of distance "safe", I urge you to please get students back on campus full time. Is it possible to continue with the current hybrid A/B groups but move to a concurrent learning model so "zoomies" join the "roomies"?

If nothing else, I am asking for you to at least reconsider your use of the SEL days on Wednesday, and instead, alternate those Wednesdays between Group A and Group B. My kids are in 3rd and 5th grades and my 5th grader is still misspelling common words and her grammar is inadequate in my opinion to be going on to middle school next year. When they compare what they are learning with what their cousins in Orange County are learning and how many hours/day they are in school; it is painfully obvious they are behind even though they are in the same grades.

I do understand logistics need to be worked out, but the 2020-2021 school year is going to be over before we know it and haven't we been working on this plan for the past year?? I ask you to work swiftly to ensure that our VUSD students get as much in person

learning as possible for the remainder of this year and that next year we return to regular schedules. The data does not support continuing to keep schools closed, as transmission is minimal as is kids getting infected. So many other districts, including some in Ventura County as well as the majority of private schools have been operating, safely full time since the Fall!

My desire as a parent of an incoming 4th grader and 6th grader is to have them on campus, in person full time 5 days a week. I understand this hasn't been easy on anyone, including myself and adjusting my work schedule to fir the hybrid model has been a nightmare. I'm sure you can understand full time working parents' points of view as well. Please make funding to keep class size at a number that allows ALL students at all grade levels to return to school full time a priority in the budget. We've only been in Ventura for 2 years and have had a great experience (what little of it there has been in the past 2 years) but I will consider transferring my kids somewhere else if we are not fully open by the Fall.

Respectfully,

Erin Reed

Erin Reed
Concerned Parent

[redacted]

From: Liz Ortiz <lizortiz74@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 6:43 PM
To: Rodriguez, Sabrena; Almaraz, Matt; Lomax, Velma; Dannenberg, Jerry; Callahan, Amy; Rice, Roger; Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Fall 2021

Dear Ventura Unified School District Board Members,

First off I would like to thank you for all the work you have done so far at getting our students back to in person learning. I appreciate that there have been so many unknowns this school year, and I can only imagine how that has made things difficult for you. I am writing this letter on behalf of my son, who is in second grade at Juana Maria Elementary school and also on behalf of those families who feel the same but are unable to voice their concerns.

We all seem to agree that having students back in person as much as possible is incredibly important and it seems the County of Ventura Public Health considers 4 feet social distance as safe and their guidance reflects that. Just this past March 5, 2021, Dr. Fauci stated in an interview with CNN that school districts have the ability to make decisions about 6 feet vs. 3 feet at the local level. On MSNBC, March 4, 2021 Dr. Fauci, also stated "You know it is not going to take a year to rearrange some of the spacing to get some of the children safer at a distance. I know there is this big concern about 6 feet vs. 3 feet, but those are things that can be worked out at the local level."

Essentially, Dr. Fauci admits there is no science to the 6 foot rule. It is dependent on local politics and leadership. What does that tell you? As one of our favorite #OpenSchools advocates in the country said: "An airborne virus doesn't behave differently based on your locality." This can get done with some adjustments, but it sounds like if science is right, we could have kids back at school four times a week after spring break.

I understand the legalities of this and who the district follows, but do people not see what this is doing to our children? My child thrives going two days a week for a couple hours on the Hybrid model and I, as a single mother I am willing to do everything in my power to have my voice heard so he is able to go back to school and enjoy his teacher and friends, but more importantly being taught by his teacher in person. Of course this past year has been incredibly hard on everyone, but if the higher ups would see first hand how this is is affecting children and their mental health you would be astonished to see the rate in suicides increased, obesity increased, depression and anxiety. I could go on, but let's face it, I am not a doctor, I am just a concerned parent.

If nothing else, I am asking for you to at least reconsider your use of the SEL days on Wednesdays and instead, alternate those Wednesdays between Hybrid Groups A & B so that the children can go 3 days a week instead of 2. I do understand that these changes take time and there are logistics that need to be worked out, but the 2020-2021 school year is going to be over before we know it and the next thing we parents will be concerned about is the 2021-2022 school year. I urge your board to work swiftly to ensure that our VUSD students get as much in person learning as possible in now, so that our community does not lose faith in our school district.

My desire as a parent is to have elementary students learning in person 5 days a week full days in the fall.

Please, please consider the funding it would take to keep class size at a number that allows all students to return to school full time and make this a priority in the budget.

Respectfully,
Liz Ortiz

[redacted]

From: Beth Harris <beth_k_harris@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 6:52 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: shawn_m_harris[redacted]
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- ESY missed opportunity

Hello Board Members and Dr. Rice,

I write to you today as a parent of a middle schooler who qualifies for special education. I'd like VUSD to consider an extended ESY program for SPED students that is one six- week long program not pieced together programs.

I don't need to tell you how difficult the past year has been. For my son, quarantine and having "all the people be sick" has resulted in many physical manifestations of anxiety for example he is newly diagnosed with Tourette's and had to begin medication. My son wants so bad to go inside DATA. The behavior team, Peter Aguirre and teacher Shannen Hobbie, in particular deserve great praise for working hard to make DL work, but nothing can make up for a year at home.

Summer break will be ten weeks. The "regular" length of ESY is 20 days or 4 weeks. This summer our SPED kids desperately need a lengthened ESY. If 20 days is the right amount in a regular year, how can 20 days suffice given the past year? I would propose a 6 week program that is cohesive with qualified teachers and in-person support services. For a kid with Autism struggling with anxiety like my son, I cannot expose him at this time to too much change or chaotic environments. With a focused six week program, staff can get to know kids, hit a rhythm and get a baseline for deficits to address in fall.

I love the ideas I have heard for general education kids about small group opportunities, camp opportunities, etc. Kids with Individual Education Plans need a different plan.

Thank you for considering these divergent needs as you make so many impossible decisions.

In partnership,
Beth and Shawn Harris

[redacted]

From: Dariann Kobe <darlucarelli@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 7:38 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Concerned Parent of a VUSD Elementary Student

Dear Ventura Unified School District Board Members,

First, I would like to thank you for all the work you have done so far at getting our students back to in person learning. I appreciate that there have been so many unknowns this school year, and I can only imagine how that has made things difficult for you. I am writing this letter on behalf of my family and also those families who feel the same but are unable to voice their concerns.

We all seem to agree that having students back in person as much as possible is incredibly important and it seems the County of Ventura Public Health considers 4feet social distance as safe and their guidance reflects that. If that is the case, I would ask you to consider getting TK-2nd and other small class size groups back on campus full time. I would also ask you to consider getting 3-5th back on campus for a full day if they have to stay on a hybrid schedule and move to a concurrent learning model so "zoomies" join the "roomies" much like is going to happen in secondary.

If nothing else, I am asking for you to at least reconsider your use of the SEL days on Wednesday, and instead, alternate those Wednesdays between Group A and Group B.

I do understand that these changes take time and there are logistics that need to be worked out, but the 2020-2021 school year is going to be over before we know it. I ask you to work swiftly to ensure that our VUSD students get as much in person learning as possible.

I am also asking you to finetune the plans for 2021-2022 so that we can get students on campus in person as much as possible. My desire as a parent is to have elementary students learning in person 5 days a week full days in the fall. Please consider the funding it would take to keep class size at a number that allows all students to return to school full time and make this a priority in the budget.

Respectfully,
Dariann Kobe, Concerned Parent

[redacted]

From: Jessica Easterly <jessica.easterly@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 7:39 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Fwd: Full Time School :)

Dear Ventura Unified School District Board Members,

First, I would like to thank you for all the work you have done so far at getting our students back to in person learning. I appreciate that there have been so many unknowns this school year, and I can only imagine how that has made things difficult for you. I am writing this letter on behalf of my family and also those families who feel the same but are unable to voice their concerns.

We all seem to agree that having students back in person as much as possible is incredibly important and it seems the County of Ventura Public Health considers 4feet social distance as safe and their guidance reflects that. If that is the case, I would ask you to consider getting TK-2nd and other small class size groups back on campus full time. I would also ask you to consider getting 3-5th back on campus for a full day if they have to stay on a hybrid schedule and move to a concurrent learning model so "zoomies" join the "roomies" much like is going to happen in secondary.

If nothing else, I am asking for you to at least reconsider your use of the SEL days on Wednesday, and instead, alternate those Wednesdays between Group A and Group B.

I do understand that these changes take time and there are logistics that need to be worked out, but the 2020-2021 school year is going to be over before we know it. I ask you to work swiftly to ensure that our VUSD students get as much in person learning as possible.

I am also asking you to finetune the plans for 2021-2022 so that we can get students on campus in person as much as possible. My desire as a parent is to have elementary students learning in person 5 days a week full days in the fall. Please consider the funding it would take to keep class size at a number that allows all students to return to school full time and make this a priority in the budget.

Respectfully,
Jessica Easterly and Family

[redacted]

From: Lisa Bondy <lisabcrafty@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 8:09 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Secondary back in school

Hello Dr. Rice and board members,

Thank you for all your hard work in figuring out what is needed to bring the secondary students back to school on campus. I know it can't be easy with the guidelines/requirements changing so often. I know as a parent with a middle school son(7th grader at DATA and a 9th grader a Foothill) and a high school son it hasn't been easy trying to figure out what the guidelines are myself due to them changing so frequently.

I have always been on board with them going back on campus from the beginning. I'm not one to speak in public or send comments, but felt you needed to hear from as many parents who want their kids on campus as possible. My boys were hopeful they would return on campus back in January and I could see their disappointment on their faces when I told them during safety week after getting off the zoom board meeting that it was now moved to April 12th. They no longer believe they will be able to go back this school year, so please make April 12th happen.

Thank you for your time,

Lisa Bondy

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

[redacted]

From: Ellen Laber <ellenlaber@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 9:13 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- written public comment

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

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 has been a challenging year for everyone, especially given the constantly evolving information regarding the novel coronavirus. 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.

In addition to in-person academic learning, extracurricular activities such as sports, music, and the arts are important for the mental, physical, and social well-being of our children. As of February 19, 2021, CDPH permitted all outdoor "moderate contact" and "high-contact" sports to resume competition, provided the County maintains an adjusted case rate equal to or less than 14 per 100,000. This guidance was updated on March 4, 2021 to include indoor sports and other sports not otherwise authorized to return to competition. While this is a huge victory for children involved in sports, it unfairly excludes children who are not involved in sports. We must recognize the equal role of music in maintaining our children's mental health and social well-being. It is just as important for kids participating in music, especially those who do not have other outlets such as sports, to socialize and collaborate with like-minded peers. Furthermore, music group rehearsals and performances serve the same purpose as sports competitions, namely, to showcase hard work, teamwork, and pride in one's school.

I personally have five children participating in music programs across VUSD and they are all suffering. Three of them are in beginning band, which is a group that will undoubtedly be the most impacted by not having in-person teaching (Imagine trying to learn the oboe without being able to read music or have an in-person instructor). It will be extremely difficult to convince these beginners to sign up for music next year given their experience this year. Even my children who are participating in advanced groups have lost motivation to continue in music. Playing alone in your bedroom does not offer the same sense of accomplishment or pride.

The success of VUSD music depends heavily on recruiting current fifth graders to join the music program when they enter middle school. This is difficult to do without music performances or opportunities to showcase VUSD music talent to the community. Unfortunately, with so many music students losing motivation this year, I am afraid recruitment will suffer, thus impacting the future of VUSD music. Keep in mind, these are some of the best music programs in the region and have been repeatedly recognized at the local, State, and

National level with Superior ratings. For many families, including mine, music is a big reason we have remained in the district this year. We will strongly consider leaving VUSD if in-person music is not an option. While other school districts have made the extra effort to have their kids practicing in small groups outside, our kids are sitting on the sidelines.

For the above stated reasons, I urge VUSD to commit to allowing all music groups, including wind ensembles, to return to playing in person on campus when school re-opens on April 1st. Other districts, such as CVUD, have already paved the way for this to happen safely; thus, precedent has been established and music groups have been meeting in person successfully. The waiver used by CVUD to cover sports, music, and the arts has been made available to VUSD. We have the tools necessary to make this happen. Please provide kids involved in music the same opportunity to play in person as those involved in sports. The future of VUSD music is dependent upon your immediate action!

Sincerely,

Ellen Laber

VHS Boosters President

[redacted]

From: Meredith Murray <mermurray6@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 9:31 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Spring options

Good Evening,
Are more days/hours an option for the remainder of this school year for elementary with the 4' social distancing rule? We are happy to adjust schedules if more in- person time is available. If this is an option, I would feel more confident for Fall and cancel my private school registration.
Thanks,
Meredith Ikeda
(Juanamaria)

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Andrea Kish <andidkish@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 9:36 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- In support of our District's music programs

March 8, 2021

Dear Dr. Rice and Ventura Unified School Board members:

Thank you for your continued leadership during such a challenging time in education.

I truly hope that our Ventura Unified School district's wonderful music programs are being enabled and supported so that our music students will be able to resume rehearsals together in person when hybrid learning begins in April. Being able to play music with their peers when they return to school will renew student interest not just in the work that is involved in playing an instrument, but in school in general.

This moment feels like a tipping point for our children—in speaking to teachers and parents alike, it seems that even our most successful students have lost direction, motivation, and focus, some even suffering from debilitating emotional distress. For all these reasons, knowing that they have a way to connect safely with their peers under the guidance of our marvelous music instructors cannot help but make a tremendous positive impact.

Virtual music class zooms are at best a pale comparison to actual rehearsals, and at worst a discouragement for budding musicians. The boost the students will get in being able to play alongside each other (safely socially distanced), creating musical art together, just can not be replicated successfully online, no matter how talented the teacher. Meaningful musical collaboration needs to happen in person, and there are ways to do this safely, as evidenced by other school districts and music programs (Conejo Unified School District, for one).

In normal times, music programs can aid academic achievement break-throughs for students. Enabling our music directors to hold in-person rehearsals is key to getting our students back on track and invested in school and in their futures.

Please know that you have parents that consider music to be of the utmost importance in their children's education, and that they will be extremely discouraged if these programs are not given support. The integrity of our District's music programs were painstaking built over the years by talented teachers and committed parents, and must not be allowed to become yet another casualty of this pandemic.

Sincerely and in support,

Andi Kish
Vice President
Cabrillo Middle School Music Boosters
[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Stefanie Hathaway <stefaniehathaway@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 10:00 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Please Open Elementary Full Time

Dear Ventura Unified School District Board Members,

Thank you for your efforts thus far in managing VUSD amid the pandemic. I don't envy your spot as you navigate so many people and perspectives. I am writing to you as a Kindergarten and 3rd grade parent. My goal is to get our VUSD elementary kids back in school full time this year and next.

I understand there are many factors at play, but as the Superintendent and board members, our community needs you to advocate for the best interest of our students. They are young and voiceless, relying on us to stand up for them and pull for the best outcomes in terms of their mental health and educational well being. My kids have lost the light in their eyes. They need social interaction, teachers they love and respect, and predictable daily routine back in their lives. Please give the best interest of the student more weight than competing pressures. We as parents are counting on you for that!

When my 3rd grader gets in the car after a hybrid in person day, she is energized, motivated and happy! It's heartbreaking to watch her lose that light over the next 5 days, knowing she'll be isolated at home with nothing but virtual friends. These are formative years for our children and their experience with school now is determining their attitude toward lifelong learning. Our family is new to Ventura and my kids need school to make vital connections. Let's respond quickly to the new 4 ft distance guidance, and give our kids their lives back. What are the specific barriers to elementary opening full time at this point? I would love to better understand what we are waiting on and who the decision makers are to help us move forward. Let's remove furniture from classrooms to create space for 4 ft between desks and get kids in school full day by spring break!

Our children need us to do right by them.
Thank you for your efforts,
Stefanie Hathaway

--
Stefanie Hathaway
newyorkthreads.etsy.com
[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Alena Sergejev <alenasergejev@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 10:06 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- In person school

Dear Ventura Unified School District Board Members,

First, I would like to thank you for all the work you have done so far at getting our students back to in person learning. I appreciate that there have been so many unknowns this school year, and I can only imagine how that has made things difficult for you. I am writing this letter on behalf of my family and also those families who feel the same but are unable to voice their concerns.

We all seem to agree that having students back in person as much as possible is incredibly important and it seems the County of Ventura Public Health considers 4feet social distance as safe and their guidance reflects that. If that is the case, I would ask you to consider getting TK-2nd and other small class size groups back on campus full time. I would also ask you to consider getting 3-5th back on campus for a full day if they have to stay on a hybrid schedule and move to a concurrent learning model so "zoomies" join the "roomies" much like is going to happen in secondary.

If nothing else, I am asking for you to at least reconsider your use of the SEL days on Wednesday, and instead, alternate those Wednesdays between Group A and Group B.

I do understand that these changes take time and there are logistics that need to be worked out, but the 2020-2021 school year is going to be over before we know it. I ask you to work swiftly to ensure that our VUSD students get as much in person learning as possible.

I am also asking you to finetune the plans for 2021-2022 so that we can get students on campus in person as much as possible. My desire as a parent is to have elementary students learning in person 5 days a week full days in the fall. Please consider the funding it would take to keep class size at a number that allows all students to return to school full time and make this a priority in the budget.

Respectfully,
Alena Chauhan

[redacted]

From: Kristen Egizi <egizi.kristen@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 10:13 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public school updates

To whom it may concern,

I have four children. 19 years old, graduated two years ago, 17 years old, junior at Buena high, 5th grader and 2nd grader. After the end of last years school year with the switch over to zoom we decided for our family that wasn't going to be what was best for our children. We unenrolled them from public school and started homeschooling. We have been beyond happy with the curriculum we choose for our children! They are challenged and learning so much it's amazing to watch!

We would love to register our children back into public school in the future but only if the days were full or mostly full. We will continue to homeschool if the days are zoom and hybrid.

I just wanted to express what myself and many other friends and I have discussed. Along with my private school family friends that have either moved to that this year or are enrolling their kids for next year.

Thank You for your time.

Kristen Nielsen

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Timur Taluy <timur@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 10:21 PM
To: Public Comment; Rice, Roger
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment 9 Mar

President Lomax, Trustees, and Superintendent Rice,
Thank you for availing the opportunity to speak at your meetings. Public engagement and transparent Government is critical the operation of our democracy, and thank you for making that possible.

I wish to speak at the 9 March meeting on items 14a and 14b.

Regards,

Timur Taluy
Chief Executive Officer

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The items contained in this communication are provided as general information and are not intended to be tax preparation or tax planning advice and should not be used for the purposes of avoidance of penalties. For proper guidance with your specific concern, you should contact a tax professional in good standing.

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[redacted]

From: Michelle Davidson <michellechemistry@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 10:50 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Professor for Full time School

Dear Ventura Unified School District,

I am writing this letter on behalf of my family and also those families who feel the same but are unable to voice their concerns.

We all seem to agree that having students back in person as much as possible is incredibly important and it seems the County of Ventura Public Health considers 4feet social distance as safe and their guidance reflects that. If that is the case, I respectfully ask that our elementary age students return full time as soon as possible. The negative effects on their young kids 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. 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 country and I'm hoping you will do what is right for our small superheroes.

I do understand that these changes take time, but the 2020-2021 school year is going to be over before we know it. I ask you to work swiftly as we don't have more time to lose.

I am also asking you to finetune the plans for 2021-2022 so that families can make a solid plan with reasonable time to do so.

Respectfully,
Professor Michelle Davidson

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Lisa <lmpete128@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 11:43 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- School Reopening

Good evening,
First of all I'd like to thank you for all of your hard work. This year has been full of trials and complications that none of us were prepared for.

I am a mother of a 3 elementary students at Citrus Glen School. I have a 4th, 2nd, and 1st grader. Two of which have IEPs and one who is an English language learner. Professionally, I am a pediatric Occupational Therapist.

This evening my 2nd grader asked me what month it was. When I answered March, he got teary eyed and said, "it's been a year since normal school?" My heart breaks as a mother for all that they are missing and as a professional I am terrified of the consequences for our kids.

I am urging VUSD to do all possible to get our kids back in school 5 days a week, full time. I consider our family lucky in that I have had the flexibility to take time off of work to be there to help my kids and yet they are still not getting what they need from me.

While hybrid is an improvement to no time at school, the lack of consistency is difficult for our younger kids who are just learning the rhythm and endurance of being in school. Core strength, multi sensory processing, attention span, problem solving, teamwork, fine motor skills, and visual attention, are just a short list of the important skills that are being missed in the absence of in person learning.

At the very least, I urge a 5 day a week morning/afternoon schedule to start to get back to the semblance of some stability which our kids so desperately need.

If hands are needed to rearrange furniture or equipment to help make classrooms more conducive our family and many others would be willing. I won't pretend to understand all that you are up against to make this happen but wanted my desire for our kids to be back in school to be heard. It is time.

Thank you for your time,
Lisa Williams

[redacted]

From: Erin Reed <emstansbury@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 7:07 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- ideas to get kids back full time

VUSD Board,

I wrote of my concerns yesterday fear I failed to offer any solutions to help get our kids back in the classroom full time. As 2 full time working parents (essential workers outside the home) as well as out of concern and fear my kids are already so behind in their education, missing their interaction with their teachers and forming lasting friendships as we have only been here for 2 years and 1 of them now has been during the lockdowns without any ability to make new friends in elementary school (my kids are in 3rd and 5th grade); getting them back in school full time is my biggest priority. I hope it is yours too.

Can you explain what the barriers to this are still? The 4' distance requirement? Is a deep clean still necessary now that we know so much more about transmission of the virus? Are we still short teachers with those that retired or do not want to return to the classroom? Bus drivers, janitors, cafeteria workers?

With no requirement to be vaccinated to return to school, shouldn't we be expecting a return to normal school on the Fall at least? What am I not understanding? it has always been a parents choice whether or not to send their kids to school and that hasn't changed! How many kids have permanently left the District? I assume the number of kids left wanting to be in person is less than before so what is the reason they cannot return ASAP? If class sizes are still too big and the 4' distance requirement remains, here are some suggestions to get whatever kids want to be back in school, back in school ASAP! Ideally by the end of the March. The stories I hear from parents about how their children are suffering emotionally if heartbreaking. Enough is enough!

1. Allow kids to go 4 of 5 days each and on home days they Zoom into the room. Yes, this means more time in front of a computer but it won't be happening every single day which has been awful for my kids.

2. Allow kids to go all 5 days in A/B groups. Rotate a different group out of class each day to go to enrichment activities OUTSIDE with substitute teachers ready to do art, PE, science, etc. Our weather in Southern California supports this and fresh air, vitamin D is essential for everyone!

3. Allow all kids to go full days with A/B and alternate Wednesdays. Can we please remove SEL days, my kids aren't doing anything on those days anyways.

With the current hybrid schedule we have, my kids have one 45'-1 hour Zoom 3 days/week on the days my kids are home has been all that they do. my 5th grader

doesn't do Canvas as her teacher does everything o the in person days. My 3rd grader does either Canvas or a homework packet on home days and is finished by 10 am. No requirement to read, AR tests, grammar is horrible for a child entering middle school next year. My kids are evidently "passing" their respective grades but I know they are behind. I am unable to return to work full time as I come home often to check on them. This is hindering not only my kids learning ability but my ability to return to work full time.

Please consider these alternatives or other creative options to get all kids at all levels back in school, sports, extracurricular activities. It has been proven it can be done safely by so many other states including other Counties in our own state.

Thank you for your consideration-

Concerned Parent of Citrus Glen 3rd grader and 5th grader

Erin Reed

[redacted]

From: Public Comment
Subject: FW: -EXTERNAL SENDER- March 9, 2021 - public statement for the record

From: Gonzalez, Rafael <RGonzalez@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 8:31 AM
To: Public Comment <public.comment@venturausd.org>
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- March 9, 2021 - public statement for the record

Good morning and thanks for the Zoom information. In addition to the live public comment, I would like the following statement to be made part of the record of tonight's meeting. I sincerely appreciate all of your time and attention to this.

Dear Superintendent Rice and School Board Members,

I'm writing as the father of three music students - two at Cabrillo Middle School and one at Ventura High School. As a person who was not fortunate enough to have music instruction in my life, I am most appreciative of the remarkable importance that music and the arts have had on our children and their classmates. While we are also huge supporters of our sports programs, it is the perception of many music parents that more time has been spent figuring out how to allow our kids to practice tackling each other, than to practice playing their wind instruments. These priorities should not be mutually exclusive. There are more kids in our music programs than in any other sport or school activity. These music programs are of crucial importance to the kid's academic and social wellbeing. Some of the kids affected will never again have the opportunity to touch, much less play, an instrument – unless we make it a priority.

Over the last six years, I have realized how truly blessed we are in Ventura to have such uniquely qualified and dedicated music teachers, like Mr. Boccali, Ms. McKay, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Rumenapp, Mr. Cody and Mr. Garnett. Many districts would be lucky to have just one of these teachers. All of these individuals spend countless hours making their respective Ventura schools known state and nationwide for their outstanding young musicians. Even more compelling, many of these kids first pick up an instrument in 6th grade. The vast majority of these kids would have never dreamed of touching a trombone or an oboe, much less be selected to the All-State band after just two years of instruction by our local teachers. It is nothing short of a miracle what these teachers achieve with our teenage kids. All of this progress is now at risk if we do not act to immediately and affirmatively re-engage these kids and save our music programs.

To put things in perspective, in 2019-2020, there were 300 kids enrolled in the Cabrillo Middle School Music Program. In just a single year, that number has dropped to 190. The approximately 150 beginning band kids in 2019-2020 have dwindled to 90 this year. There are a total of 175 kids currently playing music at Ventura High School which has achieved three Grand National titles in the past decade. Buena High School, known for its outstanding marching band, has reportedly lost many of its music students. The impact of this pandemic and the District's current inaction to re-engage

these kids will be long-lasting because these are the same kids who will hopefully go on to play throughout middle school, high school, and college.

While I have found that music parents can be extremely patient and understanding, this patience should not be mistaken for apathy. We really do appreciate the difficult situation we have all faced this past year, however, the District needs to focus as much (or more) attention to bringing back actual music instruction to our kids as it spends making sure our kids can practice contact sports or other important school activities.

I urge you to work with our music teachers and parents to develop a plan to bring music back as soon as possible.

Rafael Gonzalez

Mullen & Henzell L.L.P. - If you receive this transmission in error, please notify the sender and delete the message and any attachments.

Mullen & Henzell L.L.P. - If you receive this transmission in error, please notify the sender and delete the message and any attachments.

[redacted]

From: Susie Guzman <susieguzy@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 8:59 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Concerned Parent

Dear School Board Member,

Thank you for service to our community and to our children during these challenging times. Ventura Unified opened relatively early for in person elementary learning at a time when many districts were still 100% remote. Thank you for leading the charge.

I am writing, however, to express my concerns that we are not doing enough to get all kids safely back in the classroom for full time in person learning as soon as possible. We are at the one year anniversary of school closures, and we personally see a dramatic change in our son's mental health. Our son is in special ed 1st grade at Juanamaria. Pre pandemic, he used to be very outgoing and loved playing with as many kids as possible. He now gets anxious going to the park because "there is too many friends there" (his words). He says the same about going to school, even though there are only 5 kids in class. His academics has dropped tremendously, and he was already behind most children his age.

If we are not able to open fully for all children until the Fall of next school year, then I beg you, to at least open fully for summer school and possibly extend the summer school session. I also ask that you look into sending special education classes back sooner. Their class size is half the size of a regular classroom, therefore it would be possible to bring them back and still have the 6' (4') distance. We are desperate for our son to get more in person teaching. He needs it, as do so many other children. I also ask that you reconsider your Wednesday SEL days to in person instruction for the remaining of the school year. Groups A and B can switch off on Wednesdays.

Thank you for your time.

Concerned Parent

[redacted]

From: Jeff Mohror <jeffmohror@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 10:04 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Fully Reopen Schools

VUSD Board -

I am not even sure where to start and writing about the previous 12 months and our current state only frustrates me. I'm not going to give you a big list, links to evidence, comparison against other schools...

There is absolutely no reason that our schools cannot open fully to in person learning in the Fall (I've given up on this year). As a parent, I am tired of fighting to get this done. Regardless of the science, regardless of so many other states being open, regardless of evidence from our own partial openings, it seems we still have to plead for everything we get.

Hybrid is not an option. Fully reopen in the Fall.

A desperate, frustrated and broken parent,

Jeff Mohror

[redacted]

From: Pat Stepler <patkat01@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 10:19 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Please open schools 5 days

We are approaching the year mark of schools closing, and shifting to distant learning.

We have all learned a lot over this past year.

I ask the Board to please use the current data, follow the science, and look at how schools across the country have safely opened for students and staff.

As a parent of an elementary student, I am asking the Board to open schools 5 full days for 2021-2022. I am also asking the Board to start moving towards more hours on campus for the remainder of this school year.

Thank you for the time, energy, and effort put into this topic.

Sincerely,
Pat Stepler
Parent of Poinsettia Student

Get Outlook for iOS

[redacted]

From: Rebecca Martinez <rebeccafaye0709@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 10:36 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Kids back to school full time

Dear Ventura Unified School District Board Members,

First, I would like to thank you for all the work you have done so far at getting our students back to in person learning. I appreciate that there have been so many unknowns this school year, and I can only imagine how that has made things difficult for you. I am writing this letter on behalf of my family and also those families who feel the same but are unable to voice their concerns.

We all seem to agree that having students back in person as much as possible is incredibly important and it seems the County of Ventura Public Health considers 4feet social distance as safe and their guidance reflects that. If that is the case, I would ask you to consider getting TK-2nd and other small class size groups back on campus full time. I would also ask you to consider getting 3-5th back on campus for a full day if they have to stay on a hybrid schedule and move to a concurrent learning model so "zoomies" join the "roomies" much like is going to happen in secondary.

If nothing else, I am asking for you to at least reconsider your use of the SEL days on Wednesday, and instead, alternate those Wednesdays between Group A and Group B.

I do understand that these changes take time and there are logistics that need to be worked out, but the 2020-2021 school year is going to be over before we know it. I ask you to work swiftly to ensure that our VUSD students get as much in person learning as possible.

I am also asking you to finetune the plans for 2021-2022 so that we can get students on campus in person as much as possible. My desire as a parent is to have elementary students learning in person 5 days a week full days in the fall. Please consider the funding it would take to keep class size at a number that allows all students to return to school full time and make this a priority in the budget.

Thank you for your time and energy in resolving this matter.

Respectfully,
Rebecca Martinez and family

[redacted]

From: Joan Bennett <joanlbennett@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 10:56 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Board meeting public comment

VUSD School Board,

Please consider **adding Wednesdays for in-person learning** (alternating groups, perhaps.). Currently my children have only a 30-minute zoom on Wednesday and the rest of the day is wasted time. This time should be better utilized for more in-person learning and cleaning could be done after school, as on other days.
I'd also love to advocate for a **return to full time in-person learning in the Fall (if not sooner!)** I know there are many things that must fall into place for this to happen, but I believe that VUSD has enough creativity and resources to make this happen for our Elementary students.
Big thanks to all of you, and to Roger Rice and team for getting us back into hybrid learning. My two Elementary kids love attending in-person, and we have no worries as to their health and safety due to your care.

-A parent of two Loma Vista Elementary students

[redacted]

From:	MB Galindo <galindobills528@[redacted]
Sent:	Tuesday, March 9, 2021 11:40 AM
To:	Public Comment
Cc:	Rice, Roger; Rodriguez, Sabrena; Almaraz, Matt; Callahan, Amy; Lomax, Velma; Dannenberg, Jerry
Subject:	-EXTERNAL SENDER- Public comment for VUSD Board meeting Mar 9, 2021, agenda item 14.b

Dr. Rice, VUSD Board of Supervisors, and all other concerned parties:

By now you I'm sure there are familiar names that come into your inbox that elicit feelings that you would avoid if possible. I am sorry this unprecedented year has put you in a position of being the object of many families' and employees' frustrations but know that you will all press on.

I would particularly like to commend Sabrena Rodriguez and Matt Almarez for working so hard in being a presence in our Facebook groups and doing their best to communicate with us within the allowable scope of the Brown Act as well as faithfully advocating for and communicating the importance of our TWI program. As these emails become a part of the permanent record, they deserve the acknowledgement of going above and beyond during this pandemic school year.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Rice's responsiveness to all the emails that come across his desk. He addresses every question asked in a clear and easy to read format. Fielding so many communications during this trying year is no small task and he has risen to the call.

For the record, I would also like to acknowledge Claudia Caudill principal at Montalvo Arts Academy for her amazing leadership. She has put children first this entire school year and continues to champion for our TWI program, which has suffered greatly under distance learning. If it weren't for her leadership, advocacy and passion, I cannot imagine the dire state Montalvo would be in today.

Switching gears: As it is now well known, two key components that have kept our elementary schools so limited, social distancing of six feet and deep cleaning of surfaces, are no longer what they once were - four feet of social distance is now the standard and for quite some time now we have known that surfaces do not contribute to the spread of the virus and therefore nullify the practice of deep cleaning and religious surface disinfecting. I ask that there be no delay in implementing these changes to allow for maximum time for students to be on campus with their teachers and peers for the current school year and to remove any considerations of waiting for the fall to make these changes. I ask that action be taken to get elementary school students back on campus for a full week no later than the Monday after spring break, April 12th. I ask that the numbers for current hybrid students be used in making this adjustment and those that have opted to stay distance learning be allowed to remain so and are not taken into consideration for this current school year.

I am asking that immediate action is taken to add Wednesdays as an in person learning day that alternates between Groups A and B beginning the week of March 15th until the elementary schools are on a five day/week schedule.

I am pleading that leadership learns from past errors and shortcomings and that school leadership becomes proactive and no longer reactive - no longer waiting for permission to plan but rather have the plan ready to implement when permission is granted. I ask that the one area in which VUSD goes above and beyond is in the

area of meeting students' needs by maximizing our children's time on campus with their teachers and peers and not in the areas that are merely ideals. If that means having a classroom with only desks and relegating storage to a communal area for teachers for the remainder of the school year, then we ask for those sacrifices for the sake of optimizing the square footage in a classroom for students and not for file cabinets or art supply storage, fully acknowledging the inconvenience. I ask that large group tables sitting in a portable unused be removed from those spaces to make them optimized spaces for students and not furniture storage. At this juncture, VUSD does not have the luxury of using campus rooms as storage. Offsite storage will need to be used in order to prioritize dedicating that space for student use.

Looking to the fall, starting planning classroom sizes now. As one who was a homeschooler myself, I can speak to the effectiveness of alternative educational models that garner success depending on the student's learning style and personality; I can equally speak to the long term social and emotional development damage that comes from prolonged isolation and lack of teacher and peer interaction and its subsequent impacts on other aspects in life. I had friends who had never heard of Homestead before the pandemic and thought a homeschool model was something new VUSD was offering because of the pandemic. Better communication letting parents know the variety of learning models VUSD has to offer needs to happen. Some children are thriving in distance learning, having a distance learning track should be of significant consideration for those families and students. Send out the surveys for fall now - get your commitments to a learning model now so that class sizes can be determined and classrooms measured. Within reason, families should have to be just as accountable to VUSD as VUSD is to its families by entering into an understanding that your family is commiting to a learning model in order to make planning happen. I highly recommend using alternative communications in getting a more extensive response such as mailing surveys with prepaid return address envelopes, having school sites call each and every family, sending surveys home with the students currently on campus for them to return to their teachers.

There is no excuse to not be full time back to school in the fall for those families seeking to return to campus between teacher access to vaccines and time given to plan and be proactive. Once your on campus commitments come through, determine class sizes and use funds received to make class sizes fit the square footage of the classrooms or portables by hiring additional teachers or by changing site and grade assignments based on the families that commit to returning to campus. If communal storage needs to be longer term, until social distancing measures are removed, I ask that such an arrangement for the foreseeable future be done.

Thank you for your time.
Bonnie Galindo, parent to 1st and 4th graders at Montalvo
[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Joel C Bennett <joelcbennett@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 11:46 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Board meeting public comment

Hello VUSD-

Please work towards **adding in-person learning** sessions. As case rates have fallen dramatically, this is an ideal opportunity to begin to catch the school system up with other industries now operating at increased capacity. As you are aware, kids being **back in school** is a precursor to many parents effectively working, and society operating in a more normalized manner.

Thank you for your efforts.

-A parent of two students

[redacted]

From: Tommy Plezakowski <TPleaze@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 11:53 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Board Meeting Tonight - Comments

VUSD-

Baseball, basketball, and Baskin Robbins are all open for business, yet VUSD is doing only a few hours a day of schooling; much of it remote. If other, much less important industries can get it together, then why can't we? School is essential, and a few hours a day of remote learning is not working. If we are paying our teachers and staff full-time, then we need to be providing the same level of service as full-time school. I personally know of several parents who have left the school system for private schools, who are motivated to be open.

I am not naive to the challenges we face, nor the protocols and guidelines established by California, but again, we need to show some creativity to get kids back more of the time, and teachers unions need to balance self-interests with the needs of society and the needs of the kids they are being paid to teach.

-Tony
(parent of multiple VUSD kids)

[redacted]

From: Eric & Lindsay Streufert <thestreuferts@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 12:06 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Open Schools Pretty Please

To our elected officials.

The schools need to open. You have lost one of my children to private school. And you are about to lose another in her senior year. A straight-A , student athlete and solid addition to VUSD. If you are not open, we are moving out-of-state so both my children can attend school as any child should.
There is no science that is solid enough for our VUSD children to not be attending class, in-person full time.

Kindly,
Lindsay Streufert

[redacted]

From: Dariann Kobe <darlucarelli@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 12:14 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Write in comment for tonight's board meeting

To the VUSD Board Members;

Please, our children need to be back in school, full-time, in-person, immediately. If not for the remainder of the 20/21 school year, it must happen for the 21/22 upcoming school year. Our children are depending on us to make this happen.

Thank you again,
Dariann and Nick Kobe

[redacted]

From: Stephanie Coombs <sberglund19@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 12:49 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment - Kids back full time!!

It is important that we get out kids back to school full time immediately! Our kids are essential and we should do everything in our power to not only give them a decent in-person education, but to protect their mental health! It has been a year and I am getting beyond frustrated as I hear that other surrounding districts have gone above and beyond to do what it takes for their children to be back in class full time.

[redacted]

From: Michael Dean <mad805@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 1:11 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Comment

My kid needs to be in school 5 days a week. My wife and I both work to afford to live here. All the science says kids can be in school. Other states have begun going 5 days a week and you don't hear them on the news. Plus our local private schools in Ventura county have been open since June. If we don't open everything soon these poor kids of all ages will behind in life. Thank you for your time.

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Teya DeBlauw <teya1624@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 1:16 PM
To: Public Comment; Rice, Roger; Robert Levin
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Requesting kids on campus FULL TIME

To Ventura Unified school district board members

I am writing to you on behalf of my two children a seven-year-old and an eight-year-old. This is a vital time for them to be learning they have almost missed a full school year of actual academic work learning in a classroom where they belong. At this point it does not make sense as to why they are not on campus full time where they belong. You expect them to be in the next grade next year with only 45 minutes of distance-learning a day or three hours of hybrid learning a day makes no sense. These kids need to be with peers and they need to be in a learning a setting. If they are not in a school setting then they are not getting the full education that they deserve.
Private school students have been on campus full-time in multiple areas of the county just because people don't have the funds to send their kids to private school kids in public school are getting punished it's unacceptable and I'm sure you will see the numbers drop here at Ventura Unified School District . Students need to be on campus Full-time as soon as possible no more excuses especially with the teachers getting vaccinated. I have lost a lot of trust with the Board members I truly don't think you have what's in best interest for these kids if you did you would make it possible for them to return. If sports and activities are moving forward so should the students education! They are safer on campus instead of running around all day with there parents going to stores parks ... and whatever other events. Instead you continue to delay them returning to campus full time! I want make public this comment and I am sure I am not alone with how other parents feel.

Thanks
Teya DeBlauw
Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Deanna Gray <deannagray22@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 1:24 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Please re-open for all students

Dear Dr. Rice and School Board,
Thank you for the hard work you are doing during these most challenging times. We are parents to a 3rd, 6th and 8th grader and would like to advocate for in-person learning and a full re-opening of all schools ASAP. It is time to get creative and find a way to make this a reality for VUSD. Our children are watching and waiting for you to make the right choice to bring them back.
Respectfully,
Deanna & Ethan Gray

[redacted]

From: Kate Shanahan <kjb.shanahan@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 1:46 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Open all schools full-time, 5 days per week, for 2021-22

Board of Education Trustees,

Thank you for your dedication to our children, schools, and community. I am writing as a school psychologist, a parent of a former VUSD 2nd grader and a kindergartener, and as a community member committed to the success of our public schools.

For the 2021-2022, our preschool, elementary and secondary schools must open 5 days per week for a full-time schedule. We must commit to this vision now, and fill in the details as we go forward. The big picture (full time school) must remain fixed and constant, while the details may need to be flexible. We will never achieve the goal of full-time, 5 day per week school for next year if we allow the details to guide us to what the reality can look like for next year.

For example, if state or county restrictions limit the number of students who can be in a classroom, we might need to incorporate outdoor activities to supplement classroom learning as districts have done in other parts of Southern California. These outdoor activities could include PE, recess, gardening, SEL, science, etc. We might need to reassign staff to supervise cohorts outdoors instead of supervising hallways or restroom trips. We might need to adjust the school day to 9-2 instead of the typical 8-2:30. We need to be thinking about what we can do, not the barriers.
There will be an infinite number of number of details to be worked out, and I know our district will succeed in working those details into a plan for learning.

The first step is committing to full-time 5 day per week school for next year for all levels. I am looking to you as elected leaders to make this commitment tonight in your Board Meeting. Thank you again for the time and commitment you give to our children.

Sincerely,
Kate Shanahan

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: LOREN HAAR <lohaar@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 1:55 PM
To: Public Comment; Rice, Roger; Callahan, Amy; Lomax, Velma; Dannenberg, Jerry; Almaraz, Matt; Rodriguez, Sabrena
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Letter from VUSD parent

My husband and I STILL support the complete and immediate reopening of schools. In particular, we feel students with special needs and K-2 should be back in school full time immediately.

The medical community now has a better understanding of the virus, vaccines are being administered, and many, many schools have successfully opened and maintained safe instruction, so we feel the time has come to resume—with prevention protocols in place of course.

Now that four feet is the distance required we see no reason elementary schools need to remain in hybrid. After contacting public health myself, I have confirmed that the Wednesday disinfecting day is not required. Schools should consider an immediate reopening. Of course this will be challenging, but it is necessary.

Just to be clear, there are a whole group of parents (close to 500 members in the group in less than a week) who are determined to see schools reopened — even if legal action is necessary (as parents have done in other parts of the state). We support you, we know you have the best interest of our kids at heart, but you must see the roadblocks for what they are and move past them. This is no time for worrying about what every contingent is going to think or say or do. YOU the board need to make a decision and stick to it. Your choices? Either open FULLY, immediately, and figure out ways around the roadblocks, or stick with hybrid, knowing that you might face a lawsuit and/or lose a lot more families to other districts and homeschool and private school.

If classrooms are too small, besides the smaller furniture Dr. Rice mentioned, please consider rotating groups of students outside with substitutes ready to do art, PE, science, etc. so that students can attend full time. Another suggestion is to ask families to move to other school sites temporarily if their sites are overcrowded even with the 4ft instead of 6ft. Perhaps students who want to remain fully distanced can be removed from the home school and placed with a fully distanced teacher at a different school so that enrollment can be only for those attending in person. It should be completely unnecessary for a teacher to teach both in person and distanced.

Please do the right thing — for the mental health and well being of your children and our community. Remember, many of these kids have also gone through the Thomas Fire and they are traumatized. School is regulating and routine and gives them a connection to an important community other than their family. We are advocating for this hard, because it is so important.

We do not support any compromise that has our students at less than full time.

Thank you —
Loren and Christoph Haar
Loma Vista

[redacted]

From: Erin S <sappho42@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 2:01 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- School

Good afternoon. I feel like I write this message monthly.....nevertheless I will write it until our schools are open.

Please open up our schools 5 days a week. Please please think of our children, the typical, the atypical, the English speakers, the English learners, the homeless, the children who have means, those who have parents home, those who don't. Please send our kids and our teachers back. It has been one year. It is beyond time.

Erin Szakos

[redacted]

From: Ashley Stutzman <ashley.stutzman@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 2:05 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Reopen our schools

Our children are suffering. They are failing and we are being told by counselors and caseworkers not to worry, that it's ok. It's not ok! Our kids need to be back in school full time.
Some say the teachers are scared but When I drop my toddler off at preschool and I hear other parents that are teachers talking about how they had a hard time getting WiFi while camping to do their zoom classes, or two upper grade teachers at the park with their kids say that this is like a sabbatical year and how great it is to be done by noon everyday and get to surf, it doesn't seem like they're scared but that they just don't want to be back in person. This concerns me as my 8th grader is failing and I'm doing what I can but a lot of kids do not thrive in distance learning.
Please get teachers back to work and students back to the classroom full time so they do not fall further behind.

Thank you,
Ashley Stutzman

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Keely Henkel <keelyhenkel@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 2:23 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- let them return to school

Dear Board Members,
I want to start by thanking you for your time and commitment to serving our community and specifically the students at VUSD. I am currently a VUSD employee working at the elementary level on campus 4 days a week and remotely 1 day a week as a paraeducator. I'm also a parent of 3 students as VUSD- 4th grader at Loma Vista, 6th grader at Cabrillo and a 9th grader at VHS.

My purpose in writing to you is to ask you to do everything possible to help get our students back on campus full time as soon as possible. I have watched my own children struggle immensely over the last year in the distance and hybrid programs, it has taken a toll on their education, social and mental health.

Is there a plan for reopening full time on campus in the Fall? How can we, as parents, help make this happen? I realize there are state and county mandated restrictions but I also know surrounding districts have been able to open, while safely following these protocols. One way my sister's district up in Goleta has been able to do this is by reducing class sizes and hiring more teachers, at the elementary level. I believe the district has received funds that could be used for this. Is there a public record of how much additional pandemic funding the district has received and what it is being used for? At a recent board meeting there was a presentation on amping up summer programs, I would suggest that instead of using money for summer it would be better spent making changes to get them back in school full time in the fall. My children personally would rather be back in school full time in the fall than attend any summer enrichment programs offered.

Regarding secondary ed would it be possible to have the on campus teachers only teach the on campus kids. Teachers who don't plan to return on campus could be assigned to work with students who also don't plan to return on campus. Teachers trying to teach and keep track of both online and in person students is hard on the teachers and the students. For high school, El Camino or something similar could be offered to all the students who wish to stay completely distance learning. Trying to do both simultaneously isn't efficient or effective for teachers or students. I admit that having a completely online option is necessary, but why can't it be separated from the equation of getting students and teachers who want to return on campus/in person full time. It would be helpful to know how many families would choose not to return in person to get more accurate numbers of how many students would really be coming back on campus in the fall. This should be done now. Related to this, is it true that secondary teachers will be given the option to not return to teaching on campus and instead will teach via zoom with a substitute teacher in the classroom with the in person students? This seems ridiculous, I hope this is not the case.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration on these matters. I plead with you to do what needs to be done to get our students back on campus. I honestly never thought I would see the day when my children were begging to return to school- but they are now and they have been for months, please help make the decisions to get them fully back on campus in our schools.

Respectfully,
Keely Henkel
[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Marisa Brown <mb93004@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 2:38 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Please get our kids back in school in person.

For several months I have sat quietly, waiting to see what would happen in our schools but I won't sit quietly any longer. My own 4 kids, my 11 nieces and nephews, my numerous friend's kids and the 400+ students I taught in art at Juanamaria elementary school need to come back. Today I will stand for them and ask that my voice be heard and ask how I can help.

I appreciate all that you have done this past year, honestly I would not want to be in your position having to make all of these hard decisions this past year.

But bottom line...our kids need to be back in class full time.

I have a senior at El Camino, she started the school year as a junior at Buena High school but in the fall after several down trodden months she made new plans for herself, transferred to El Camino at the semester and is graduating a year early and headed to college in the fall. I am proud of her for taking control of what she could but also sad for her as we have watched friends all across the country with kids in school participating in all sorts of activities. I also have a sophomore at Buena high school, an 8th grader who was at Balboa and a 4th grader who was at Juanamaria that I am currently homeschooling. A year ago homeschooling wasn't even a thought that had crossed my mind but after school shut down in the spring I knew I had to explore other options for my two youngest kids because after virtual learning in the spring we needed to do something different this year.

While homeschooling is working it is far from ideal. My kids need someone other than me trying to teach them. I firmly believe students respond much differently to a teacher than to a parent when it comes to learning and completing assignments.

I believe that our elementary schools are headed in the right direction to get kids back in school everyday but I am worried about what is happening with our secondary schools.

Students will be going back to our secondary schools in April but what will this really look like? As a former high school and middle school teacher I can't even imagine being a teacher right now trying to teach to students in the classroom and at home simultaneously.

As I watch my own high schoolers at home on zoom it is extremely difficult for them to stay focused on what is happening on zoom. I can only imagine that it will be even more difficult when their teacher is trying to teach to a group in class and they are at home. If you think students are tuning out now...I can only imagine they will definitely tune out given the model that is currently going to be used in our secondary schools for hybrid learning. If we are not full time in the fall we need to explore other options for a hybrid model.

I respect that some families for whatever reason need to keep their children home and that they will not be returning. How many students and families are part of this? I know that this was done in elementary and distance only classes were created for these students. Is this being done for middle school and high school? Those students who are not planning on returning in the fall need to have an online program created

that is currently going to be used in our secondary schools for hybrid learning. If we are not full time in the fall we need to explore other options for a hybrid model.

I respect that some families for whatever reason need to keep their children home and that they will not be returning. How many students and families are part of this? I know that this was done in elementary and distance only classes were created for these students. Is this being done for middle school and high school? Those students who are not planning on returning in the fall need to have an online program created for them just like we did for our elementary students. Until this happens how can our high schools really plan for next year?

In doing this I firmly believe that we will have a more accurate count of how many students really plan on attending in person school and we will be able to plan accordingly and we will be able to get secondary students in school in person.
Please don't forget our middle schoolers and high schoolers, they are suffering more than you can imagine academically, socially and mentally. What can we do to help them get back to school in person?

Thank you,
Marisa Brown

[redacted]

From: Kelly Hanighen-Lynch <khanighen.lynch@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 2:45 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Full time Elementary School

Hi,

I am writing to ask that you address your reopening plans for full time, in-person education for elementary schools. Teachers have been and are being vaccinated right now, and it is time to get students back in the classroom as soon as possible. Especially in regards to the fall, we as parents need to know the plan NOW so that we will have time to pull our students and place them in other non-public options if you are going to continue with the hybrid program. We will absolutely NOT BE PARTICIPATING in another year of hybrid learning.

These plans need to be discussed now.

Kelly Hanighen-Lynch

[redacted]

From: Jeff Coombs <keeper15jc@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 2:47 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Our kids need to be back full time

Our kids are essential and need to be in school full time! This is ridiculous that our kids are suffering needlessly. There are measures that can be taken to ensure that everyone is safe and have our kids back in school full time. The longer the kids are kept out of school the more it is going to hurt the public education system and in turn our kids. It is already happening with multiples of parents taking their kids out of public school and putting them in private school because they are full time. This needs to end! Kids need to be back in school full time now!

Thank You,

Jeff Coombs

Ventura Unified Parent

[redacted]

From: Downey, Kevin
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 2:52 PM
To: Public Comment; Lomax, Velma; Almaraz, Matt; Dannenberg, Jerry; Callahan, Amy; Rodriguez, Sabrena
Subject: Public Comment: Information and concerns about re-opening

Dear VUSD School Board Trustees,

First, I want to thank you all for your leadership during such difficult times. Thank you for all that you do for our community!

I am writing this email to share some information and concerns about the process of reopening. I apologize for addressing multiple issues, but I hope you see the needs and concerns for the topics addressed below.

If we open for some sort of Orientation on 3/31 and 4/1, AND are doing testing (at Buena for 3/25 & 3/26), teachers are losing almost a week right before the end of the quarter, which makes planning units and projects (like finishing a novel in time) rather difficult. I know the money would be very helpful, but if we are allowed to open just for 6th graders and 9th graders for one day, we can compromise to get the money, but minimize impact. We can also "practice" re-opening in a smaller scale before we roll it out to all students coming to school for in-person learning. While I would plan on coming, it is possible that many teachers would call out for those days, resulting in a sub crisis that I hope does not happen.

It appears like we are getting new direction/guidelines for wind instruments and choirs. If we allow wind instruments and choirs to meet outdoors, how are teachers going to connect to the internet for students at home? Also, if students have to sign a waiver, what happens to the students who chose hybrid but don't sign the waiver? Do they just sit there? Will they be forced into DL? If students have to sign a waiver in order to come, will staff be required to sign a waiver as well, or will staff have the option to refuse to sign the waiver? Do I roll out a piano and sound equipment somewhere outdoors? What do we do if it rains? I feel like there are a lot of unanswered questions that I hope get worked out ASAP, so teachers can appropriately plan new lessons for when we return.

I also would like to advocate against dropping the SEL program on Wednesdays going forward. Students rely on the SEL instruction for connection and inclusion in these isolating times. Also, they use this time to connect with their teachers over questions, missing assignments, and other curricular concerns. Teachers use this time to connect with students, grade assignments, plan and build courses, communicate with parents, conference about students who aren't thriving, and other pressing tasks. As we return to in-person instruction, the time demands will be much greater on teachers. Our Elementary Hybrid teachers are teaching two days each day- once for in-person, once for the DL students. For Secondary, that goes to three days each day- once for group A, then again for B, and also managing group C. It is already impossible to do all of this in a regular work day, losing Wednesday will make it impossible to meet the needs of the students.

Safety is a top concern, and reducing the distance for social distancing from 6 feet to 4 feet is unsafe. The January 14th instruction from the California Department of Public Health is clear on keeping 6 feet. We should follow these rules for the safety of the students, their families, and the employees of VUSD.

Sincerely,
Kevin Downey
VUEA member

[redacted]

From: Lacie Tarrant <lctarrant13@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 2:54 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Kids Should Be Back

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: Olivia Marsdin <olivia.marsdin@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment agenda item

Dear VUSD Board,
In every grade, VUSD students spend less time with their teachers (either in person or virtually) than any other district in Ventura County. Moorpark, Pleasant Valley, and Las Virgenes students spend more than twice as much time with their teachers as VUSD students. Why are VUSD students spending so little time getting instruction from their teachers? I have heard speculation that VUSD and VUEA have worked out a contract that allows teachers to spend very little time in live instruction, and speculation that VUSD fears liability if a student misses class. So why is it that VUSD students get less time with their teachers than all other students in the county?
Please discuss this point thoroughly today.
Sincerely,
A VUSD Mom

[redacted]

From: Natalie Oman <natalieoman@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:01 PM
To: Public Comment; Rice, Roger
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment 3/9/21

The following is to be adapted into the public comments for board meeting on 3/9/21

As a parent and community member, it is my desire to see students **back in school full-time now.** If there are road blocks to the reopening from public health officials or elected officials, please communicate that to myself and other parents to we may lobby them effectively. If the push back is from teachers unions and teachers, I request that information is also relayed to myself and other parents so we may be in conversation with them. VUSD has always been a champion of choice for parents and students. Open the schools and let parents and students choose what is best for their family.
Thank you,

Natalie Oman
natalieoman@[redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted]

From: L Martinez <leababy82@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:14 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public comment

Dear Ventura Unified,

Please follow the science and the recommendations and reopen all schools five days. It's time to start focusing on the entire health of our children. The harm that children have suffered from the schools closing are way higher than the risk they have from covid. Please do what's best for the children and families of our community by opening full time.

Thank you,
Lea Martinez

[redacted]

From: Jennifer Montoya [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:16 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: jen@jenmontoya.com
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Opening of Ventura Unified Schools

Importance: High

Dear Ventura Unified School District Board Members,

Thank you for all the work you have completed in getting our students back to in person learning. I appreciate that there have been so many challenges this school year – to say the least! I am writing this letter on behalf of my son who is currently at Mound and headed to Cabrillo in the Fall. We all agree that having students back in person as much as possible is incredibly important. It is understandably more challenging to achieve this for secondary than elementary but myself and so many parents I know are willing to help any way we can.

For elementary can they attend Wednesdays in place of SEL? Group A and B could alternate coming each Wednesday. I do understand that these changes take time and there are logistics that need to be worked out, but the 2020-2021 school year is going to be over before we know it and our kids need more in person instruction.

My son is an only child and we have tried every way to keep him engaged but he has suffered from isolation. I am a huge supporter of our public schools, have five teacher friends in the district and support all of your efforts. Lastly, let's do everything we can do to open full time next year. I have heard so many parents say they are going to pull their kids from the district if we aren't back full time. Thank you!

Respectfully,

Jennifer Montoya
Mound School Parent
[redacted]

[redacted]

From: cassie.guerri@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:18 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER-

Good afternoon, I'm sure you are bombarded with comments going into this evenings meeting. My name is Cassandra and I have 3 children, 2 in which are school age. I have a high schooler who attends Buena and due to public schools not being in person at the beginning of the year I had to put my kindergartner in private school because I feel that this is a very imperative time for him to be in person learning all his fundamentals. I writing just to let you know my stance on reopening, my 15 year old has always been an honor roll student as well as plays multiple sports. He has never struggled so much until distance learning. I do everything I can to help him, but I am not a teacher. My kids need to be in person being thought by the people who went to school to do so. I am all for our children being in person, I'm good with the 4 ft. Distance and would prefer that SEL days be reconsidered and use that extra day for more in person learning. I appreciate all the effort being put forth and I know it's hard. I manage a grocery store and have to work this entire time, face to face with hundreds of people a day and can say as long as masks and sanitation is followed our children will be just fine. Thank you for your time.

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Jocelyn Coon <jocelyn.a.coon@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:23 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Item #14

In regards to item #14 on tonight's agenda- I think it is imperative to the well being of our students that an actionable plan be in place for our kids to return to school 5 days a week for the 2021-2022 school year. Finish out this school year as planned with hybrid learning, but by fall families need to have the option to send their kids back full time. If families still have concerns about in-person learning then have a completely distance learning option that they can commit to for the year. And if teachers don't want to teach in person then they can teach those distance learning students. Please let those who feel comfortable coming back return full time to the classroom! Our kids have put up with enough change and inconsistency this past year!

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Julie Heidrick <julieheidrick@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:25 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- School Reopening

Dear Dr. Rice and members of the board,

Please do everything in your power to open the schools full time. Watching a zoom meeting is in no way providing the quality education that the students of Ventura (our future leaders) deserve!

The hybrid model slashes teacher instruction in half or less than half just due to the fact that students are not given the same instructional minutes as they would have in the classroom. At the secondary level students have classes twice a week. This is just unacceptable. I'm not even sure how this is allowed a year later.

I realize there are public health obstacles to overcome, but I'm certain with your leadership, you can find creative ways to get our FUTURE LEADERS back on campuses.

Sincerely,
Julie Heidrick

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Noelle Davis <noelledavis@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:26 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Re-opening schools

Hello I would just like it to be known I am the parent of two vusd students who completely supports reopening. I am very on board with the 4 foot social distancing and support any more days or hours of in person learning.
Thanku so much
Noelle Davis

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Melyssa Noren <m.noren@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:31 PM
To: Public Comment; Rice, Roger
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Full Return to School

Dear Dr. Rice and VUSD Board,
I thank you all for taking the time to listen to all of us crazy, impassioned parents! We know this past year hasn't been easy on any of you, and I can speak first hand when I say trial and error has been a staple around my house! With that, I ask for you to consider making changes to what we've been trying so far. Given the news that social distancing requirements have lowered AND the opportunity for the majority of staff to at least complete their first vaccine, I believe we need to get our elementary kids back on campus for more hours. My two Juanamaria Dolphins have been different kids on their Hybrid A days!! It's awesome. However, we are still struggling to get our school work done on the off days. They don't want to Zoom, and they definitely don't want to listen to mom and dad anymore :(I'd encourage a full return, but if that is not possible, it's not too late to switch to an AM/PM model. If none of this is possible, I hope you are very clear in your reasoning. We need to understand what the delay is. And on that note... transparency is requested for the 2021/2022 school year. PLEASE tell us what the various plans are, and the milestones needed to determine what option the year is stared with! So many of our dear friends are considering private school (not an option for us, or we would be too) and I hate to see my kids lose all their classmates when we can return VUSD to something great by next fall.
Thank you for listening,
Melyssa Noren

[redacted]

From: Beth & John Martinez <martinezjb@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:32 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Return to Full-time

Dear School Board Members,

I am writing to you to ask for you and the VUSD School Board to consider returning elementary schools to an "as close as possible" full time schedule beginning April 12, 2021.

I fully support the K-2 grades combining the two Hybrid groups into one group if distancing requirements are reduced to 3-4 feet. The bigger challenge comes with the upper grades. Of course, having them return full time would be the best case scenario but I know these student take up a bit more space so iif the Hybrids combined they wouldn't fit safely into the classroom. I currently have a total of 26 students so I know they couldn't fit. The suggestions I have are these:

- Hybrid students(grades 3-5) go a full day on their in person days. Teachers can "Zoom In" the off group during group instruction such as a Literature Study, Morning Meeting, etc. The off group attends the Zoom and then works on their asynchronous assignments. We could to a 3,2,2,3 rotation of days per group. Wednesday could be a banking day with shorter hours for students with the off group "Zooming In" for an SEL lesson. If Wednesdays are shorter then I could continue teaching a small group that day.
- The second option is to see how many upper grade classrooms could combine and fit into one classroom. For those who can't, like mine, find an alternative location for that class if possible or hire an additional teacher (per grade needed) to allow for a rotating schedule for specific subjects such as PE, Art, Science Lab, STEM, and Music. With this option upper grade student could attend five days a week full time like K-2.

These are just two suggestions that I thought would be the easiest way to get kids back in the classroom for more hours of learning. I prefer the first option as I think it could be easily implements with few barriers to overcome. Thank you for taking the time to read through my ideas. I look forward to seeing what the next steps are for our students.

Elizabeth Walker Martinez

[redacted]

From: Christal Anderson <christalanderson@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:36 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Comment for this evening's board meeting

Submission of comments for this evening's Ventura unified school district board meeting March 9th 2021

I am a mother of four children covering elementary school, middle school and high school. I could easily get caught up in the emotions of what it has been like to try and navigate education with my children over the last year, but I think you all already know OUR children are suffering and we need to make changes now.

I am speaking out to let you know our family is ready for our children to go back to school full time with no zoom meetings or online schooling. I understand that full time, (5 days a week in person schooling) throughout all grade levels might be difficult because of outside regulations, but we need to move forward and do what is best for the kids.

It is time for our school district to take a stance and say we, the Ventura Unified School District, will do everything in our power to help our children get back to in person- full time school. The district needs to work towards this goal now and put plans in place for school to return to in person learning in the fall.

We as parents want to stand with you, the school district, and help tackle anything that stands in between our children going back to school. Our children need our support now. Let us work together for our children. We the parents can help lobby and tackle regulations that need to be changed so that in person schooling can be possible. You just have to let us know what you need.

Studies and numbers prove that it is time for our children to return back to in person schooling.

I do understand that accommodations need to be made for families that cannot returned to school and that an online academy program needs to be there to support those children. The online education for these children needs to be completely separate from the majority of our children who will be returning back to school. I love the teachers in our district and know that they are stressed, we need to let our teachers get back to teaching in person. Teachers should not be expected to teach a classroom of children and zoom at the same time, that is ridiculous.

Separate teachers need to be assigned to children that will be doing online schooling. The online schooling teachers need to be trained and focus solely on helping and meeting the needs of those children that are doing online schooling.

I know that all of this is not a simple task but I am here to support you, Ventura Unified School District, in taking a stance now and doing what is best for our children. Put our children back into school full-time.

Thank you,
Christal Anderson

Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPhone

[redacted]

From: Jena Burdick <jenaburdick@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:42 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public comment

I'm a parent of a 1st and 3rd grader and I want them back in school everyday. It's been a year, it's time. Thanks for your time!

[redacted]

From: Carrie Coffman <heavey3000@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:42 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Comment for meeting

Good Afternoon,

My middle schooler in special education needs to be in school 5 days/week. It is possible with their smaller class sizes. Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Meyer, Jason
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:47 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Don't Change Something that is Working

Dear VUSD School Board Trustees,

I'm writing to express my concern about the new plans our Superintendent is suggesting at this time. Apparently, in an effort to earn the school district money, Mr. Rice wants our school to open up to more students per classroom, and offer more days of in person instruction per week. In order to accomplish this goal, Mr. Rice would like to shrink the mandatory state distancing from 6 feet apart to 4 feet apart. To provide more instruction in person, Mr. Rice would like to give up the Wednesday SEL days/teacher planning and grading time to have the students here an extra day. I would like to address each "plan" by describing what life is like in reality at school. I'm sure that you all don't have the time to go to watch day to day activities.

First, let's discuss the classroom setting. Right now, the students are spaced our six feet apart. The students by now know the routine and are prepared to give their "breakfast"/"lunch" count first thing in the morning. We progress through our morning lessons until our recess time. During that time period, if a child needs to use the restroom, I walkie/talkie to a school attendant who escorts the child to the restroom. Can you imagine the number attendants that would be required if the class sizes were to go up 40%? Right now, I have capacity for 13 students which is the fits the size of our classroom. I assume that may go up to 19. They are doing well wearing masks although some students need to blow their noses outside. After recess, we have our lessons until dismissals. We walk out to one side of the building and the students are dismissed. We are now in week 5 of this routine, and the students are getting the hang of the process. They know what to bring and what to take home for their Zoom classes. Once we are finished after our two days, the students are prepared to do their curricular work on Canvas. As teachers, we've figured out the two days and two days schedule well with lots of planning as a team.

What would change with this new plan?

1. We would need more staff on campus to insure distancing.
2. We would need more custodial staff to be sure to wipe down the restrooms after each visitor stops by.
3. More playground attendants would be required. It is very tough to keep the students distanced on the playground. I hear reminders constantly.
4. Transportation for daycare is already tricky. I can't even imagine, on a district level, how drop off and pickup will be coordinated with 40% more clientele.
5. Safety overall would be a huge consideration to myself, other staff, and the students. 4 foot distancing would be a huge change to some parents. I have worked with 3 families this year that were fearful of sending their students back in hybrid. If you choose to follow Mr. Rice's suggestion, don't you think you need to have a revote by all parents so that they can choose what they feel is best for their child and family? When you unilaterally change CDC guidelines that everyone in the public sphere must follow, it seems strangely omnipotent to say that a 4 foot spread is now, OK. I would feel more comfortable if CalOSHA or some outside organization confirmed this plan. Again, safety vs. money?
6. Lastly, and very important in my experience as a teacher, the students are now into a routine! You may not have taught elementary school for a long time now, but consistency is truly the key to a comfortable experience. We have been so inconsistent this year that the students have not been able to get into any flow at all. Here we are...5 weeks in. There is a rhythm now.

Now, to Wednesdays. I'm sure Dan will explain this evening that we have agreed numerous times this year in our MOU that Wednesdays are SEL days, I thought I should give you an idea of what Wednesday looks like to me.

Well, my typical Wednesday begins at 7:30 where I go to work on grading for the week. We have established due dates of Wednesday for Canvas assignments. Hybrid A gets a couple of extra days, but it works out. Grading writing, altering google docs into Canvas assignments, constructing meaningful feedback to the students is also importing if not time consuming. At 9:00 we all gather for Mindfulness on Zoom. We work on sharing, relieving stress via yoga moves etc. It's a break from the curriculum for the students for sure. They then get the rest of their Wednesday to complete their assignments before the pattern begins again. I break out with students who need some extra math support. At 10:30, we meet as a grade-level to plan instruction for the week. This includes us going through all of the Canvas assignments and

uploading new documents. There are quite a bit of alterations that we do that take time. I'm getting better with working with Canvas, but I am still slow. I am extremely thankful for those heroes who built this curriculum for us. After lunch, I get back to the grading of the week and usually begin construction of my weekly parent letter. Just to let you know the amount of grading...there are generally 8 math assignments, 4 language arts assignments, one social studies slide deck, and one science slide deck. With 24 students, it can be a lot, but rarely do all the students complete their assignments. Now that we are back in class, there are paper and pencil items to grade as well, but I usually save those for the weekend. At 1:45, we usually have a staff meeting which lasts up to 90 minutes depending on the needs of the school and the needs of the staff to vent.

Now, I wonder when will I do all of this on Wednesday if there is in person teaching? When will the students get their Mindfulness? Do art class? Do music class? Complete their assignments (because they are typical kids who wait until the last minute sometimes)?

Once again, I speak for elementary school. I don't know what the upper grades will look like. But I know that the students, at this moment in time, have consistency, know the expectations, and can be prepared. I'm thinking that the parents as well like the consistency, too. And, when I think about this change again for the final 8 weeks of school? Don't forget that we are expected to do State testing as well! This will be done in front of a computer screen I assume.

So before you get convinced this evening by the glow of 15 million dollars, please consider how this change will disturb something that is already working. As we have seen as staff this year. A lot of these directives get thrown at the school without a solid plan or forethought. I've watched the Board Meetings. It usually ends up that what is best for the students wins out. Is the money what is best for the students?

Thanks for your time. I appreciate all your efforts this year.

Jason Meyer
Portola Elementary School
5th Grade

Jason Meyer
5th Grade Teacher
Portola Elementary: Ventura Unified School District
[redacted]
jason.meyer@[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Andrea Labbe <andreamlabbe@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:47 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- School

I am writing real quick to let you know that I would like to see both of my kids back in school full-time (like prior to covid-19) in a manner that is safe for teachers staff and students, as soon as possible.

Thank you for all the hard decisions you've had to make.

Andrea Labbe
Arbonne
Independent Consultant

[redacted]
ALabbeArbonne@[redacted]
www.AndreaLabbe.Arbonne.com

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[redacted]

From: Chad Anderson <chadloans@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:50 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Letter to School District Board Meeting

I am a parent of four children in the Ventura Unified School District. I have a child in elementary school, middle school, and two children in high school. I would like to express my concern for the well-being of my children and all the children in the district.

I have seen serious psychological and learning problems take place because of the distance learning program. I have talked with doctors and they agree that the long term affects of distance learning is not good for children.

All parents want to do what is best for thèir children. Parents fall into one of two categories: the first category are parents that want their students to go back to school in person learning full-time. The second category are parents who do not want their kids to go back to school and to continue with distance-learning. The vast majority of parents are in the first category and want their children to go back to school.

It is the Ventura Unified School District's responsibility to do what is best for the students. I believe it is possible to accommodate both categories of parents. Other school districts in the state have done this and students are happy to return to school. Parents have noticed a significant increase in their children's psychological and mental health since returning to school.

There are also two categories of teachers. Teachers that want to go back to classroom learning, and teachers that want to teach on zoom from home. The vast majority of teachers I have spoken to would rather go back to in person classroom learning. I personally know two teachers in the district that have been forced to retire early because they are not satisfied with our current distance learning program and they would rather be teaching in the classroom. This is sad that teachers with over 30 years of experience teaching in the VUSD are retiring with a sour taste in their mouths. I hope the VUSD will correct this problem before more of our good teachers are put into a position where they throw their hands up and just retire so they don't have to deal with the current situation. In the end, our students are the ones that end up suffering and missing out on good, quality education.

As a parent, I am asking the board to please accommodate the majority of the parents and return students to in person classroom schooling. Our children's psychological and mental health is what is at stake. Please do what is right and get the children back in classroom learning as soon as possible, preferably before the fall semester.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

[redacted]

From: Christal Anderson <christalanderson@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:54 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Letter to district school board meeting

Submission of comments for this evening's Ventura unified school district board meeting March 9th 2021

I am a mother of four children covering elementary school, middle school and high school. I could easily get caught up in the emotions of what it has been like to try and navigate education with my children over the last year, but I think you all already know OUR children are suffering and we need to make changes now.

I am speaking out to let you know our family is ready for our children to go back to school full time with no zoom meetings or online schooling. I understand that full time, (5 days a week in person schooling) throughout all grade levels might be difficult because of outside regulations, but we need to move forward and do what is best for the kids.

It is time for our school district to take a stance and say we, the Ventura Unified School District, will do everything in our power to help our children get back to in person- full time school. The district needs to work towards this goal now and put plans in place for school to return to in person learning in the fall.

We as parents want to stand with you, the school district, and help tackle anything that stands in between our children going back to school. Our children need our support now. Let us work together for our children. We the parents can help lobby and tackle regulations that need to be changed so that in person schooling can be possible. You just have to let us know what you need.

Studies and numbers prove that it is time for our children to return back to in person schooling.

I do understand that accommodations need to be made for families that cannot returned to school and that an online academy program needs to be there to support those children. The online education for these children needs to be completely separate from the majority of our children who will be returning back to school. I love the teachers in our district and know that they are stressed, we need to let our teachers get back to teaching in person. Teachers should not be expected to teach a classroom of children and zoom at the same time, that is ridiculous.

Separate teachers need to be assigned to children that will be doing online schooling. The online schooling teachers need to be trained and focus solely on helping and meeting the needs of those children that are doing online schooling.

I know that all of this is not a simple task but I am here to support you, Ventura Unified School District, in taking a stance now and doing what is best for our children. Put our children back into school full-time.

Thank you,
Christal Anderson

Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPhone

[redacted]

From: Adriana Ebell <ebelladriana@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:52 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Elementary school

Hi,

Since there was an approval for 4ft social distancing, will elementary students be able to physically attend school more than 2 days a week in the near future?

Thank you

Adriana Ebell
(Juanamaria)

[redacted]

From: Wren Powers <wrenpowers@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:56 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Re-opening schools

President Lomax, Trustees, and Superintendent Rice,

Thank you for giving parents the opportunity to speak or lets comments be known at the board meeting.

I would like to make known my family's urgent request that VUSD schools expand in-person instruction to the highest capacity possible, as soon as possible. We believe it is detrimental to the health, education and socialization of our children and all children that this be done immediately. Don't wait until next school year! Or until you have the perfect system in place. The time is now. With safety protocols in place and with teachers being given the option to receive the vaccinations, we see that schools are not places where Covid is spreading. It is frankly pathetic how little instruction our children are receiving even since hybrid began. The district simply isn't doing enough to get back on track to normal.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments tonight at the 9 March meeting on items 14a and 14b.

Regards,

Wren Powers
[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Vaishali Patel <vaishali10@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:56 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Schools re opening

>
> Hello-
> I would like to request we try out hardest to open schools 5 days a week. Not only for the elementary kids but secondary schools as well. We are willing to help in any way possible to make this happen with all safety precautions taken.
>
> Thank you,
> Gordhan Family from Pierpont Elementary
>
> Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Jessica Gardner <beachjes@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:56 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Return to School

Hello,
I'm a mom of a 2nd and 3rd grader and an employee of VUSD. I know how much work has gone into the school reopening we currently have and I know how much work it will be to change it up. However, I've seen how much the the two days a week of hybrid has done for my own children and all the children at my work site. I have complete faith that safety measures can continue to be upheld in the amazing manner they are now with more in person time. I'm asking for a five day a week return for all elementary students. I believe this can be achieved with the 4ft social distance measures. Thank you for all you do!

Jessica Gardner

Good Evening,

Thank you for your efforts to make our community a great place for student learning! I appreciate all you do for our district!

My name is Erica Walker, I am a parent of three students (Senior, Sophomore, 5th grader) in VUSD, I am also a teacher in a neighboring district. I have a few points I'd like to bring to your attention today.

First, I'd like to thank VUSD for bringing the implementation of SEL weekly to fruition. While I think it was an impactful idea, SEL is only as good as the teacher conducting the learning. I am not confident that all VUSD teachers were trained in the guidance of SEL and I don't believe it is being used to the best of its intent. Students are so far behind in their learning this year, and pacing is so far off, that I don't see it being beneficial to continue with this wasted day. We are doing our students a great disservice at utilizing a full instructional zoom day on SEL. Just in case you aren't aware, many times High School teachers aren't even showing up for SEL Wednesday check-ins...I'm not here to tattle, but just to bring to you the reality of what's actual happening. SEL days give lazy teachers a day off, and in all honesty, students aren't using the day to get "caught-up". The lack of accountability is costing our students instructional time and/or possible SEL benefits.

Secondly, it's only fair that the Senior Class is given the opportunity of having an in-person graduation on their campus. I'm not sure why there has been a "shot-gun" decision already made. If you remember back one year ago today...COVID wasn't even a thing, however they were able to pull off a drive-by graduation by the end of the year. There is no way this is a decision that needs to be made in March, with March numbers, when the ceremony is 3 months away. If Disneyland and the MLB are opening to guests, then we can pull of an in-person graduation! Please help in making this happen for our Seniors. I know that people say last year's drive-thru was great, but that was planned in a quick pinch...those students lost 3 months of school, they had 2/3 of a Senior year. Many of this year's Seniors will not even step foot on campus until their graduation day. Between COVID, and the Thomas fire, the sad reality is that this class has only spent 2.5 years on campus out of their 4 years...help them get what they deserve. Let's move some mountains for these students. We can have multiple days of graduation, maybe 150 students per day, with a new class speaker each day to share the duties, and let students choose the day they wish to graduate so they can be with their friends. Limit the number of guests, per usual...if we can do it for football-just put a little heart into it and we can do it for graduation! I think we can do this-they deserve our BEST, VUSD! They've waiting 13 years for this, let's do BETTER!

Lastly, I see how far behind my students in my classroom are, only having 10 hours of zoom instruction per week, and I know how far behind my children are at home, having less than that in elementary. Our curriculum is mapped intentionally for a 7-hour school day, and 180 days

per school year for good reason. My 5th grader at home, is currently only getting math lessons when she is "in-person" two days per week, we all know there is no way humanly possible to get through a year of fifth grade math curriculum at the rate of two math lessons per week (not to mention the entire Nation's History from First Americans, to Exploration, Colonization, Revolution, Construction, and Westward Expansion). Luckily, I also teach fifth grade and I can teach my daughter at home; however, I am no AP expert and I am very little help to my High Schoolers who are being given little opportunity to thrive academically this year. WE HAVE TO GET THESE KIDS IN SCHOOL FULL DAYS! The gift of time will have the greatest benefit to helping try and fix the academic mess we have before us. The task can be convoluted and messy, but we owe it to the children of VUSD to get them back to school full days. Other districts are doing it, maybe we should be observing and reaching out to others to see how we can bring this to fruition for our learners.

Thank you for your time and your efforts, just as we teach our youth to have an open mindset, it's time to practice what we preach and afford them the same thinking from our district leadership!

Erica Walker

[redacted]

From: Jessica St. Pierre <jessicanstpierre@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 4:03 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- public comment

Dear VUSD Board,
Thank you for all of your hard work. I fully trust that you have our children's safety and education in mind. I am asking for you to please really consider the new legislation that would allow for 4ft social distancing to give our children more time in the classroom with their teachers. This is how they learn best! My son has made leaps and bounds just being in the classroom 2 days a week...I can only imagine how much more he could learn with more days! Also, please consider making the SEL Wednesday an in person day. My 3 children feel this day is a "day off school" and is not beneficial to their education. The SEL subject matter can be covered in person in class!
Thank you,
Jessica St. Pierre
Juanamaria & Balboa Parent

[redacted]

From: Noel Jordan <noiemj@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 4:11 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Reopening schools

Dear Ventura Unified School District Board Members,

First, I would like to thank you for all the work you have done so far at getting our students back to in person learning. I appreciate that there have been so many unknowns this school year, and I can only imagine how that has made things difficult for you. I am writing this letter on behalf of my family and also those families who feel the same but are unable to voice their concerns.

We all seem to agree that having students back in person as much as possible is incredibly important and it seems the County of Ventura Public Health considers 4feet social distance as safe and their guidance reflects that. If that is the case, I would ask you to consider getting TK-2nd and other small class size groups back on campus full time. I would also ask you to consider getting 3-5th back on campus for a full day if they have to stay on a hybrid schedule and move to a concurrent learning model so "zoomies" join the "roomies" much like is going to happen in secondary.

If nothing else, I am asking for you to at least reconsider your use of the SEL days on Wednesday, and instead, alternate those Wednesdays between Group A and Group B.

I do understand that these changes take time and there are logistics that need to be worked out, but the 2020-2021 school year is going to be over before we know it. I ask you to work swiftly to ensure that our VUSD students get as much in person learning as possible.

I am also asking you to finetune the plans for 2021-2022 so that we can get students on campus in person as much as possible. My desire as a parent is to have elementary students learning in person 5 days a week full days in the fall. Please consider the funding it would take to keep class size at a number that allows all students to return to school full time and make this a priority in the budget.

Respectfully,
Concerned Parent of 2 (soon to be 3) elementary students

[redacted]

From: CHRIS AND DIANA Hightland <hightlandfamily@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 4:22 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Board Meeting 3/9

Good Evening Board Members,

I wanted to write a letter because it is important. It is important to myself for supporting my children's needs.

I am a full time working mother with a 2nd grader in TWI at Montalvo. I am also a step mother to a 7th grader at Anacapa. My husband and I have worked entirely through this pandemic while distance learning our children at home.

I have recently taken covid family time where I do not get my full pay check, but I have taken this sacrifice because it is better for my family. My kids need me at home and to not be left alone for hours and hours, to figure out zoom on their own, and to not have structure since there isn't any with school for my 2nd grader only twice a week. My 7th grader luckily has it down, however she shouldn't have to be asked to be alone a lot of her day just because she is able to.

I have now become the statistic of women to take time off and break away from their own career to help teach their children at home. I know that I am not alone I know that I am very grateful to have an employer that enables this. However my children should be in school.

My 2nd grader is in TWI, and this has not been easy. Us parents are being asked to teach our children in a program that was designed for them to be in class being taught by their teacher. For the parents that do not know Spanish, where have our resources been for help? Where has the small groups besides just recently that started in February been? When you do not know the language it takes us twice, if not three times or four times as long to do things. One my daughter reads it in Spanish, I have to translate it in English so I can understand. Then we have to talk about it in Spanish if I can help, comprehend it and then write it in Spanish. We have made sacrifices to afford things like a tutor that isn't cheap, but worth it. We have made sacrifices to enroll my daughter in a wilderness class in Spanish because we do not want her to fall behind even if it is inevitable. We are present and active parents, so just doing the bare minimum is not going to sit with me well. I am not making more money, if not I am making less, but we are having to sacrifice to make this work for our child.

My 7th grader has not been in school nor small groups in person since March of 2020. We are lucky that she has been getting straight A's and paying attention. We are sad for her because she already has a very hard time making friends, and this would have been an amazing, crucial year for her socially and emotionally. It would have been really beneficial for small groups this entire time at the secondary school. We have such a beautiful, big campus and any time outside with other kids even if they were just reading would have been beneficial.

I am grateful that we are in hybrid, but 3 hours and 20 minutes is just not enough time. The other two days on zoom distance learning at 12:45 pm is just awful. Asking an 8 year old to be present after 10 am is just horrible to be honest. We love love love our teacher and I feel like we are so lucky that we are not more behind than we are if we are. But we are not behind because my husband and I have pushed our children to do well. We have found other resources and made sacrifices through this pandemic without the help of our schools. It would be great if our PTA would have options for us, or if we even got reimbursed for tutoring/approved programs. This

tutoring isn't for anything else but that we are not physically in school and need the help since again we do not speak Spanish.

My 7th grader SEL day on Wednesday is a complete joke. She watches videos for 30 minutes. They don't discuss the videos, or talk about social emotional. They just just watch a movie and then that's it. Use that time constructively, or don't use it at all and I could find something better for my child. Have a small group on Wednesday and actually talk about social emotional things. These are teenage years so I am sure there are plenty of things that could be discussed rather than watching Soul or Inside Out.

I urge and plead to get our students back to 5 days a week, if not now, at least for the Fall. Please make this a priority, please put our students first.

Thank you so much,

Diana Hightland

[redacted]

From: JNO Sound <jnosound@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 4:25 PM
To: Rice, Roger; Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comments 3/9/21

How can we be the district that leads and doesn't follow. Any investor knows you need to be there not get there. As investors in students and teachers I challenge you to be the district that leads. If you are uninspired, tired or worn down it comes across. Seek out those who are inspiring to you and bring that to the board. Be the district that makes and inspires other districts.

As it stands now the Ventura School Board looks like wait and see and reactive instead of pro active. I've never heard Mr. Rice ever say I've been talking to the union constantly. It's as if he has no intention to push to get down the field. He seems to be more of a sit on the sidelines and try to please everyone. What can we do to lead and not follow.

Thank You,

Johnny Kubelka
[redacted]

[redacted]

From: michael cary <bigmcren@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 4:26 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Open school

My name is Mike Cary, I'm a firefighter, my work Wife is a hair dresser and we have two boys in VUSD, first and third grade Juanamaria. I'm writing this to let you know what a crazy year we have had, I understand a year ago we didn't understand much about this virus and we had no option but to go to distance learning. But now we know it is safe to return to school with safety measures in place. If we are now in school full time by the fall I will be pulling my kids from the VUSD. My wife grew up in Ventura and we love the Juanamaria. The mental toll this year has put on my kids and wife is not worth trying to may zoom work, these kids will be so behind the curve and the mental Heath will be blamed on this for many years to come. Please consider every option when making decisions about our kids future. Thank you, Mike

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Brooke Martinez <brookemartinez@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 4:27 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment for Tonight's Meeting

Dear Ventura Unified School District Board Members,

First, I would like to thank you for all the work you have done so far at getting our students back to in person learning. I appreciate that there have been so many unknowns this school year, and I can only imagine how that has made things difficult for you. I am writing this letter on behalf of my family and also those families who feel the same but are unable to voice their concerns.

We all seem to agree that having students back in person as much as possible is incredibly important and it seems the County of Ventura Public Health considers 4feet social distance as safe and their guidance reflects that. If that is the case, I would ask you to consider getting TK-2nd and other small class size groups back on campus full time. I would also ask you to consider getting 3-5th back on campus for a full day if they have to stay on a hybrid schedule and move to a concurrent learning model so "zoomies" join the "roomies" much like is going to happen in secondary.

If nothing else, I am asking for you to at least reconsider your use of the SEL days on Wednesday, and instead, alternate those Wednesdays between Group A and Group B.

I do understand that these changes take time and there are logistics that need to be worked out, but the 2020-2021 school year is going to be over before we know it. I ask you to work swiftly to ensure that our VUSD students get as much in person learning as possible.

I am also asking you to finetune the plans for 2021-2022 so that we can get students on campus in person as much as possible. My desire as a parent is to have elementary students learning in person 5 days a week full days in the fall. Please consider the funding it would take to keep class size at a number that allows all students to return to school full time and make this a priority in the budget.

Respectfully,
Brooke Martinez

[redacted]

From: lynsey@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 4:29 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Concerned Parent

Dear Ventura Unified School District Board Members,

I am a parent of a 5th grader at Juanamaria. I have seen first hand how the affects of not being on campus have changed my child's outlook on learning. I understand that there have been so many unknowns this school year, and I can only imagine how that has made things difficult for you. It has been difficult for us too. I am writing this letter on behalf of my family and also those families who feel the same but are unable to voice their concerns.

We all seem to agree that having students back in person as much as possible is incredibly important and it has been stated that the County of Ventura Public Health considers 4feet social distance safe and their guidance reflects that. If that is the case, I would ask you to consider getting elementary students back on campus full time, or at least more days per week or longer time on campus for their group days.

If nothing else, I am asking for you to at least reconsider your use of the SEL days on Wednesday, and instead, alternate those Wednesdays between Group A and Group B for an additional 3rd day of on campus learning.

I do understand that these changes take time and there are logistics that need to be worked out, but the 2020-2021 school year is going to be over before we know it. I ask you to work swiftly to ensure that our VUSD students get as much in person learning as possible.

I am also asking you to finetune the plans for 2021-2022 so that we can get students on campus in person as much as possible. My desire as a parent is to have students learning in person, 5 days a week, full days in the fall. Please consider the funding it would take to keep class size at a number that allows all students to return to school full time and make this a priority in the budget. Our children should not have to suffer any longer. I appreciate your time and hope that we can find a way to ensure that education, mental health, emotional growth and academic development are prioritized in an in-person learning environment. After all, if there's a will there's a way. Thank you.

Respectfully,
Concerned Parent

Lynsey