



## DISTRICT NEWS BRIEF & UPDATES

July 20, 2020

From the Office of Superintendent David Alexander, Ed.D.

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[www.bUSD.org](http://www.bUSD.org)



*Mission: Inspire learning*

*Vision: Engaging and  (valuing/caring) for our families, students and staff to empower our community.*

Dear Bellevue Union School District Families and Staff,

I am writing to share an update on the efforts to reopen schools at the state, county, and district level. I know that the uncertainty presented by this pandemic is very challenging for parents, students, and staff. The team at Bellevue Union School District is working hard to get the best and most current information possible to share with you so that you know what to expect in the fall. This is one of many updates that you can expect as we prepare for the 2020-21 school year. I want to personally thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,  
Dr. David Alexander  
Superintendent

### **State Superintendent Tony Thurmond Issues Statement in Response to Governor's Updated School Guidance - July 17, 2020**

SACRAMENTO—State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond issued the following statement today in response to the Governor's updated guidance for schools:

"I want to commend the Governor for his leadership and for his focus on prioritizing public safety during what might be one of the most challenging experiences we will face in our lifetime. I appreciate the concern he expressed today as a father, his concern for the safety of California's six million students, and his concern for the health and welfare of our schools' educators and families.

"I also want to thank the Governor for the work he has led to ensure that our educators have necessary personal protective equipment—already on its way to our 10,000 schools—in the form of millions of units of face coverings, face shields, hand sanitizer, and thermometers.

"Today's guidance from the California Department of Public Health lays out clear metrics for our schools so that they can best understand the conditions that determine when they must close. On Monday, the California Department of Education will host a meeting for our 1,000 school districts to unpack today's guidance. We are grateful that our partners in the California Department of Public Health will present the guidance in this format and take questions from educators across the state.

"As so many of our schools will begin their academic year virtually, we remain committed to continuing to work with the Governor, the Legislature, the State Board of Education, the California Department of Public Health, and educators across the state to address ways we can improve distance learning. We must accelerate this effort to ensure there is consistency and continuity moving ahead and that we are doing everything in our power to offset learning gaps that have been exacerbated by this pandemic."

**For Immediate Release**

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**Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) Statement in Response to New State Directives for Schools July 17, 2020**

Following is a statement from Dr. Steve Herrington, Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools, in response to new state directives for schools issued today.

Today's announcement by Gov. Gavin Newsom represented a significant shift from local school district control of reopening efforts, to statewide directives meant to address the health and safety concerns presented by a dramatic rise in COVID-19 cases statewide.

From the beginning of the pandemic, SCOE and the school districts we serve have emphasized the need to use the best state and local health guidance available in order to prioritize student health and safety. To this end, I am glad to see the direction provided today, which marks the beginning of the California Department of Public Health playing a stronger role in setting the criteria for reopening and operating schools under COVID-19.

We appreciate that the new directives provide specific guidance—not only for when to close, but also for determining when it is safe to reopen. Schools need this level of detailed and consistent guidance in order to provide the students, families, and staff they serve with the reassurance that clear safety protocols are in place to protect their health.

I know that these new directives, while helpful, present yet another change in the information that schools and families have been receiving this summer, and that this could create some confusion and frustration. However, if there's been one consistency during this ever-changing situation, it's been the need to be flexible and make adjustments based on changing conditions. SCOE and the districts we serve will continue to be nimble and adapt based on the best available guidance of state and local health experts.

Since Sonoma County is currently on the state watch list, schools and districts will likely need to begin the school year in the distance learning portion of their plans—depending on how long Sonoma County remains on the watchlist. Currently, Sonoma County is on the watchlist until the state takes further action, which would be no earlier than July 22. Based on the new guidance, all schools must remain in distance learning at least until their county has been off the state's watch list for 14 days. Beginning in distance learning is consistent with the direction that most local school districts were already planning to take.

This guidance also addresses the wearing of face coverings, social distancing, increased hygiene practices and cleaning, as well as rules for operating transportation and sports programming. You can find the Guidance for Schools and School-Based Programs at the COVID-19 website at [covid19.ca.gov](https://www.covid19.ca.gov), clicking on the "Industry Guidance" section, and scrolling down to the Schools tab.

SCOE will now work closely with local school leaders and our public health department to interpret these state directives and how they impact the plans that schools have been diligently creating throughout the summer. Additionally, SCOE will work with our public health partners to ensure that Sonoma County has adequate testing and contact tracing capacity to ensure a safe return to school once Sonoma County is off the watch list.

I will meet with Sonoma County's 38 superintendents, as well as charter school and private school leaders, early next week to discuss this new guidance in detail. SCOE has been and will continue to provide professional development and other supports to assist districts in building robust distance learning options for all students. Sonoma County schools are committed to serving families with high-quality instruction and supports, regardless of the current conditions under COVID-19.

I thank our school leaders and staff, as well as our parents and students, for their flexibility and understanding during these incredibly challenging, fluid, and unprecedented times.

## **BUSD Update**

With the ever changing conditions of the pandemic we continue to plan according to the information we have at any given moment. The virus will continue to dictate which route and options will be provided to our students and families at any given moment during the school year. Our plans will be discussed at our July 21, 2020 Board Meeting starting at 6:00pm. Please visit our website for further information

Currently our plan has options outlining a full remote learning program to begin the year and hybrid models (combination of in person instruction and remote learning) so when we are able we will be able to transition back to the school settings. The plan may change and adapt to the needs of the community.

We recognize this situation is unsettling for our community as everyone attempts to plan for the start of school in August. We are working diligently to resolve our challenges to reopen schools while keeping the health and safety of our students and staff as our top priority. We must be ready to adapt to changing conditions.

In partnership with you,

Dr. David Alexander  
Superintendent

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