

July 24, 2020

Dear San Marcos Unified Community and Staff,

As a Governing Board, we want to address the concern and confusion regarding our board meeting on Tuesday night, and the education plan for the upcoming school year. As board members we are asked to make difficult decisions, but nothing in our years of service weighs as heavily on us as the reopening of schools during a pandemic. The health and safety of all stakeholders is in the forefront of our decision making. After much discussion and debate, we were able to give board direction to the district on the required “next steps” to start the school year on August 18th. While we are not in agreement on our physical reopening plan, we are united in our belief that SMUSD has highly educated, well trained, and amazing teachers, administrators and staff members who are 100% committed to the educational success of all students. The plan for physically reopening our schools will be determined at a later meeting, after considering best practices for schools, what is working, and not working, in other Districts.

All students will be starting the school year online. There are two learning pathways for the school year. *Remote learning* will be the online learning model that students will attend if they would like to return to in person instruction when able to do so. *Leading Edge Virtual School* will be the online option available for students who wish to remain off campus for the entirety of the school year. Information for remote learning and virtual school was sent out this week, and the District will hold informational webinars in English and Spanish on the school options on July 27th at 6:00 pm. The webinars will be uploaded to our district website for families to access at their convenience. We are asking families to make a school selection by August 2nd.

As we head into August and the start of school, the Governing Board will hold a special study session to provide information, answer questions and address concerns regarding the following:

- Distribution of devices and instructional materials to students
- Ability to ensure internet access for all
- Plan to provide training for staff, parents, and students
- Meal distribution
- Typical day schedules for classes at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
- Support for Special Education students and English Language Learners
- Address specialty programs like IB, Dual Immersion, Advanced Placement, and others
- Clarify our ability to use our school sites to assist students and staff (KOC, internet access, teacher use of classroom, IT support and student support as allowed)

As we transition through the start of the school year, we will continue to hold special study sessions to address current issues and concerns. Sessions will include:

- Physical reopening plan based on best practices, and current knowledge of safe school openings (to be voted on at a future regular board meeting)

- San Diego County off the watchlist, what are the next steps?
- Site based health and safety procedures
- Student/staff expectations for a safe and healthy campus

We will take public written comments in advance of all study sessions. Based on the time available, we will read select submissions live during the meeting. Submissions not read at the meeting will be submitted for the record. We will provide a forum to submit questions prior to the meeting and we will do our best to synthesize them and address those questions during the session. The sessions will give the board a better opportunity to ask questions, provide actionable feedback and direction, and will provide better clarity for the community about the upcoming school year. A video of special study sessions will be uploaded to our district website for families to access at their convenience. We are absolutely committed to ensuring the best possible educational experience for all students in these uncertain times.

We are in this together.

Sincerely,

The San Marcos Unified School District Governing Board