

July 1, 2020

On Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, the day that we, along with almost every other school district in California closed, I described the situation as “fluid”. We had just finished holding an emergency board, meeting on Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> followed by a special board meeting on Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss what to do about extra-curricular activities. Staff spent all day on March 12<sup>th</sup> developing a system to implement the Board’s decisions. However, by Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, we closed all of our schools in an effort to help flatten the curve and reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19. I have to confess, that I thought at the time that “fluid” meant we would close down for a week or two, disinfect our schools, and then we would be back to normal.

Well, here we are. We have been closed for nearly three months. Our summer school is continuing as an enrichment program through virtual learning and we are trying to figure out how to safely re-open our schools in the fall along with the rest of the economy.

Even back in March, our goal was always to get back to normal as soon as possible. As educators, we have a strong belief that having our students physically in front of us is the best way to provide direct instruction, provide immediate feedback, provide hands-on opportunities for experiential learning, and to provide a warm and welcoming adult for students to rely on.

So, As we continue to navigate the uncertain and long-lasting effects of COVID-19, WJUSD has been fully committed to a thoughtful and guideline driven approach to planning for the upcoming school year.

At the forefront of this process is the continued health, safety, and security of our students, staff, and families. Reopening campuses will require specialized training and revision of current practices to levels of disinfecting and sanitizing surfaces.

And, one thing remains clear; education will not be ‘business as usual’. Using our health guidelines as a roadmap, we are planning for multiple options. In our work, you will see four options represented: a traditional in-person model (for TK-12 classes), a blended learning model (for our

alternative high school, adult education, and pre-school), an optional virtual model (for TK-12), and an independent study learning model (currently available to K-12). These recommendations come using the current guidelines of the California Department of Education (CDE), California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and Yolo County Public Health.

The best information we have today requires us to plan for student instruction both at school and virtual while retaining flexibility in all plans should we be required to adjust to new health guidelines or should health guidelines be removed. Also, our goal is to standardize the expectations of what and how our students learn and teachers teach. Virtual learning will look much different than it did this past spring

All recommendations that we are working on for the Board of Trustees are aligned to guidance from the Yolo County and State Department of Public Health to the best extent possible. So, as we work collecting feedback, from students, staff, and parents, to develop a plan on how to re-open in the fall, we do so with the understanding that this too would be “fluid”. That this would be the first step toward normalcy. And finally, that this plan will be subject to new and developing guidelines.

Tom Pritchard



WJUSD Superintendent