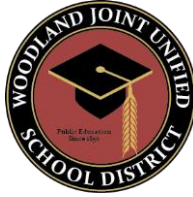


# WOODLAND JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

"Excellence for All"

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District Website: [www.wjUSD.org](http://www.wjUSD.org)

## **Superintendent's Office**

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Tom Pritchard, Superintendent

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Schools to Begin the 2020-2021 School Year with Virtual Learning**

Woodland, Calif., July 17, 2020 – As of Thursday, July 16, 2020, Yolo County reached 1,062 positive cases of COVID-19 with 519 cases here in Woodland. As such, we are deeply concerned about the steady rise of positive cases as we prepare to open schools. Additionally, counties surrounding Yolo County are experiencing increased cases as well. Until we can see a sustained steady decline of COVID-19 in our District, we will need to open school on August 19, 2020, with a **Virtual Learning Model**.

WJUSD has been preparing to reopen schools using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and County Health guidelines for putting best practices and safety measures in place. Our shared interests of having all students and staff return to school remains our goal. However, the health and safety of students and staff at our schools continues to be the highest priority of our Board of Trustees and District, and our best chance to safeguard everyone is to open virtually.

Throughout our planning, we have used five main guiding criteria to guide our efforts:

- Ensure the safety of all students and staff
- Maximize student engagement and student academic growth
- Provide support for social-emotional needs
- Provide support for staff and parents
- Assure operational and financial viability

While the decision for full Virtual Learning was difficult and complex, the Board and Superintendent are confident that starting the school year with full Virtual Learning is the safest and healthiest way to ensure our students continue their education even during this pandemic. To support planning for the District, staff, and families, we will start the school year with full Virtual Learning and monitor through the 1st trimester of school to determine how we can phase into a model to return as many students as possible back to school depending on the health conditions of our community. The next two months will determine whether WJUSD will remain in full Virtual Learning for the rest of the semester or begin phasing into a Blended Model - all dependent on the level of spread of the virus in our community.

We have learned a lot from our experiences last March. Virtual Learning will be vastly improved from what we experienced last spring. Education continues to be identified as an "essential service." We will continue our food services and meals for our students and families and ensure a meaningful education for all students. To maximize District resources and best support our school staff, the schools will remain closed to the public but

staff will be able to fully access all teaching resources, technology, and ensure collaboration for lesson planning and peer support.

The state has provided guidelines for what virtual instruction will look like under the current COVID-19 conditions:

1. Instructional minutes are required to be met.
2. We expect daily instruction between the classroom teacher and students.
3. Lessons will be standards-aligned and we will provide grades as in our traditional school year.
4. All support staff will provide support services for our students whether virtual or in-person (depending on the “phase” we are in) for specialized services of need.

The decision to begin the year using Virtual Learning is not final for the entire school year. It is only the beginning to start school. As has been mentioned on several occasions, the COVID-19 situation is extremely “fluid” and we are planning a phased-in approach as the COVID-19 landscape improves.

“Thank you for your patience and understanding during this pandemic. Although our planning and efforts are unprecedented, we continue focusing on increasing supports and opportunities under our current reality,” stated Trustee Rogelio Villagrana.

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