

April 30, 2020

Greetings,

As we enter into week 8 of our campus closures and the Stay at Home order, it appears as though our collective physical distancing efforts may be making a difference. Though it is clear we have a way to go before we return to our schools and offices, things seem to be going the right way.

Here are a few updates:

CSEA MOU and ESCTA Side Letter

We have reached or nearly reached agreements with both associations to ensure our common priorities are met. First, the safety of our employees is paramount, second, compensation continues, and thirdly, the appropriate COVID-19 leaves are used when needed. All these items and others are critical so that employees are able to carry out their work effectively.

Grading Framework

On or about April 6, principals forwarded a grading framework to help teachers with final semester grades. We are following the basic principle of "Do No Harm," with a dose of student accountability. Recognizing that many of our students are not in ideal learning situations, we need to help, not hurt them. Equally important is distinguishing the efforts of students that are striving to do their best with teachers that are striving to do their best. Such worthy effort should be valued and recognized when awarding a grade.

Graduation

One of the challenges of the pandemic is the inability to gather and celebrate in large groups. As of today, we are planning on broadcasting a prerecorded graduation ceremony on June 3rd. Efforts are underway to plan and prepare for that event. If the Stay at Home Orders are relaxed or lifted, and with authorization from Imperial County Health Officials, we will return to campus for some form of in-person ceremony. We are exploring ways students can be involved in the process. Please forward ideas to our school principal, ASB and class advisors. Keep in mind that each school has over 400 seniors and some ideas that we have considered may not be logistically feasible.

Summer School

We are planning on a Distance Learning program for students that need to retake a class, and for Migrant and Special Education students. Information can be found on the district's webpage.

Planning for Next School Year

There is still tremendous uncertainty about next year. You might have heard the Governor's comments about coming back in July and we have also heard from others saying schools may delay until September. We have been planning for different scenarios for next year with various models based on assumptions. ICOE is partnering with SDCOE on plans and recourses for coming back to school that we will build upon. We will need everyone's best thinking to address the potential challenges for next year. More information will be developed this next month and will be asking for input. Given our best plans, we will still need to be flexible to the changing conditions this summer and possibly well into next school year.

Next year's Budget

The 2020 Governor's Budget May Revise will be very different from the Governor's Proposed Budget in January that included a 2.29% COLA. We anticipate a 0% COLA from the Governor in May. The State will still adopted budget by June 15th, but will not know what the real funds are until after the July 15th tax deadline for the 2019 year. Then, the legislature and Governor will adjust the state budget later in August or early September. This will cause school districts to also adjust budgets mid-year. The LCAP plan has been pushed from a June 30th adoption deadline to December 15th with Governor Newsom's Executive Order [N-56-20](#), to allow for mid-year budget adjustments. One can speculate that the 2019 year was good because it was pre-COVID19 closures. However; a looming concern will be the 2020 tax year when tax filings are due in April 2021 and how the 21-22 budgets will be affected. We believe we are headed into some tough financial times and we are preparing for what that might bring. <https://edsources.org/2020/how-bad-will-it-be->

[one-expert-looks-at-k-12-budget-cuts-on-the-horizon/630369](#). I am an optimist by nature. We will find solutions to these problems, but we need to go forward well informed and prepared.

In conclusion

Just like the events of 9/11 changed our world to a new normal when traveling, the COVID19 pandemic may also change our lives again. I recognize we are all in the storm together, but we also have different boats and we are not all in the same situation. As I have called a few employees, I hear stories of our teachers balancing the teaching their classes, and being the at-home teacher for their children. Stories of challenges and stories of victories. Stories of service and going the extra mile. As we proceed into the end of the school year, stay safe. Together, we will pull through the storm.

Ward H. Andrus, Ed. D.

Superintendent