

Soledad Unified School District

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ADMINISTRATION

Randy Bangs
Interim Superintendent

1261 Metz Rd., Soledad, CA 93960

February 17, 2021

Dear Soledad USD Parents and Students

On Tuesday, the Monterey County Office of Education sent notice to school districts that Monterey County's Adjusted COVID-19 Case Rate has fallen below 25/100,000, meeting the metric as established by the COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year to allow K-6 schools to re-open to in-person instruction. Schools in Monterey County are now able to plan to reopen for in-person instruction in grades K-6.

What this means for the Soledad USD

The news from Monterey County Office of Education is a positive development for our district. There are steps which would need to be taken prior to the reopening of elementary schools. The district is required to submit a COVID Safety Plan (CSP), COVID Prevention Policy (CPP, required by CalOSHA) and the School Guidance Checklist (SGC) to state and county agencies for review. We have submitted a CSP which was developed and reviewed with Soledad Teachers Association (STA) and the California School Employees Association (CSEA) leadership. We are in the process of completing a CPP and the SGC which will also be reviewed with STA and CSEA leadership. The CSP will also be reviewed with parent representatives. Once these plans are reviewed by the county and state health agencies; and no feedback is received, we would be allowed to reopen.

Another key step in a reopening process would be to update our own School Reopening Framework, which was approved by our Board in July 2020, (prior to the notification that schools would not reopen for the start of the 2020-21 school year). In addition to safety measures as outlined in the CSP, CPP and SGC; the framework addresses instruction, operations, student support, and family engagement. The district will need to negotiate Memorandums of Understanding with STA and CSEA which would address key aspects of reopening. Given the steps described above, a date for any reopening of schools has not yet been set.

Schools that reopen for in-person instruction must adhere to the appropriate California Department of Public Health guidelines. With the requirement for physical distancing, it is anticipated that classrooms will be occupied at partial student capacity. Our School Reopening Framework outlines compliance with the California Department of Public Health guidelines through a hybrid learning model; which utilizes stable cohorts of students that are present on campus part of the week, and continue distance learning on the days when they are not on campus. Please note, Distance Learning accommodations may need to be made for families who are not comfortable sending their students back to the physical campus.

Our district's CSP includes multiple mitigation strategies including face coverings, enhanced cleaning/disinfection, stable cohorts, physical distancing, health screenings, personal protective equipment (PPE), transportation, healthy hygiene practices, contact tracing, COVID-19 testing, and more. We are also working on an employee COVID cadence testing program and collaborating with the Soledad Health Care District on logistics for vaccinations for employees, when they become available for educators in Monterey County.

It is understood that there are strong feelings regarding the prospect of reopening schools. All of us share an interest in providing students with the opportunity to return to in-person learning as soon as safely possible. We also understand that we want to ensure that the reopening of our schools is done in the most responsible and safest manner possible for our students and employees.

For more information you may visit the Safe Schools for All website at <https://schools.covid19.ca.gov/>. Please stay tuned for more information to come.

Sincerely

Randy Bangs

Randy Bangs, Interim Superintendent