

## District Communication 3/17/21

March 17, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Following are promising updates for both elementary and secondary instructional programs.

### TK-5th Grades/Elementary Update:

We are pleased to move forward with our plan to begin in-person instruction for students in grades TK-5 starting Monday, April 5. This return date for Elementary students immediately follows the one week, March 29-April 2nd Spring Break for students and staff. The District's TK-5 in-person instruction model is a hybrid am/pm schedule which meets the California Department of Public Health and other governing entities' requirements to maintain "stable groups". Stable groups of students are when there is minimal mixing, such as in elementary classrooms; and where there is appropriate social distancing within classrooms and throughout the campus. The TK-5 in-person instruction registration process is in full swing and, as of today, close to 70% of students district-wide are enrolled for in-person learning. As I mentioned at the March board meeting, **we now see more hope than challenges** as we move forward.

### Kern County Anticipated to Move into Red Tier Next Week:

Based on information the district received yesterday, it appears likely that Kern County may transition from the "purple" tier into the "red" tier next week (Tiers are based on risk of community disease transmission. For more information on the state's color tier system, visit the CA Blueprint for a Safer Economy website <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy>). Moving into the red tier allows school districts in our county to consider returning secondary students to in-person instruction with appropriate modifications and safeguards.

### 6th-8th and 9th-12th Grades/Secondary Update:

The District and the leaders of the Desert Area Teachers' Association (DATA) are in the process of finalizing working condition agreements in order to begin in-person instruction at the secondary level. We are currently planning a return to in-person learning that would initially include seniors at Burroughs High School and Mesquite High School, starting Monday, April 5. Once the District and DATA reach an agreement in the coming days, parents of seniors will have the same registration opportunity as is offered for elementary students, providing choice between In-Person and Distance Learning. We hope to be able to extend opportunity to other grade levels as we move forward.

### Returning to Our "New Normal" as Quickly as Safely Possible

I want to sincerely thank all who have dedicated time and effort to a solution, while also recognizing that the impacts of the pandemic have been challenging for many of us. We look to the future as one filled with more hope than challenges, and I assure you we will continue to plan for the return of all our students back to the classroom as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,  
Dave Ostash  
Superintendent