July 24, 2020

Dear VCPUSD Families,

You are probably aware of the announcement by Governor Newsom last Friday stating that schools in counties on the state’s County Monitoring List must not physically open until the county has come off the monitoring list for 14 consecutive days. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) currently uses six indicators to track the level of COVID-19 infection in each California county as well as the preparedness of the county health care system – data that includes the number of new infections per 100,000 residents, the test positivity rate, and the change in hospitalization rate, among others. Any county that does not meet the state’s benchmarks is put on the County Monitoring List. Governor Newsom also listed several other mandates that apply to schools. If you would like to read more about his plan for schools, please go to Governor Newsom’s Pandemic Plan for Learning and Safe Schools.

So what does this mean for the Valley Center-Pauma Unified School District? Because San Diego County is on the state’s monitoring list, we will be opening up in a virtual setting in all of our educational models described below. The virtual setting will be different from the distance learning we provided after the abrupt school closure that began on March 13th. During June and early July, teacher and administrator teams developed instructional frameworks for 100-percent virtual learning and for hybrid online/classroom settings. To ensure engagement across all of our educational settings, we will be using Google Classroom as our common learning management platform from which our students will access core curriculum with daily live interaction, receive feedback from their teachers, perform assessments, and receive intervention, etc.

We are planning to return to face-to-face classroom instruction as soon as it is safe to do so. However, as mentioned, we will need to meet virtually at the start of the school year. We will be recommending to the board that we remain in the virtual learning format until September 25th. Before that date arrives, we will consult with state and public health officials to determine if we must continue for another period of time in the virtual learning format. Once we have clearance to meet in person again, the circumstances likely will require a hybrid model in which students study in the classroom on certain days of the week and learn from home on other days. That approach reduces the number of students on campus at any one time, thus allowing for physical distancing and proper sanitation of facilities. Then, just as soon as it is safe, we will pivot from the hybrid model to our traditional classroom instruction five days per week.

In addition to our primary educational model described in the previous paragraph, we are developing plans to offer families alternative options that offer robust learning opportunities outside of the traditional classroom setting.

• VC Prep will continue to offer Independent Study. In this model, learning is facilitated by a credentialed teacher who assigns lessons to be completed at home. The teacher meets individually with students for one hour every week, and attendance and academic credit is earned through completion of the assignments.
• We are planning a virtual school for our students who prefer to remain at home this year. In this model, students study from home, interacting daily with their credentialed teacher and classmates in a structured online setting. To ensure success, clear expectations and a defined role for parents will be provided.
• We are exploring Home School as an option whereby the main teacher is the parent, using the school district’s curriculum and checking in periodically with a credentialed teacher to monitor progress. This model likely will be for TK-8 only, at least initially.

These educational options will be presented to the governing board for approval at a special meeting to be held by August 4th. Upon approval by the board, these options will be presented to our parents with specific details that will help them choose their preferred option.

With regard to our athletic programs, CIF has announced the following modifications:

1. The official start date for high school sports will be December 14, 2020, for the 2020-21 school year.
2. This plan does NOT eliminate any sports for the 2020-21 school year.
3. This plan will break the school year into two specific Seasons of Sport (Fall and Spring).
4. Each season will be close to full length in a reduced calendar school year.

CIF will release the 2020-21 Sports Calendar by August 14th.

I would like to thank everyone for their patience during this pandemic that has hit our district, state, nation, and the world in ways none of us could have ever imagined.

In closing, our community has always risen to challenges because of our unity of purpose and our shared commitment to the education of our children. Even though this challenge seems to be ever-changing, we will rise to the occasion and continue to provide our students with the excellent education they deserve and have come to count upon. On behalf of the entire VCPUSD family, we are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with you as we weather this storm.

Stay VC Strong!

Ron McCowan
Superintendent

Superintendent
Ron McCowan

Board of Trustees
Mike Adams
Wendy Heredia

Julie Stroh
Mary Polito
Craig Adams