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Dear BUSD Students, Families and Employees:

As we start 2021, there is still hope and optimism ahead of us for a better year, but the first couple of weeks have been very challenging. We must continue to find ways to come together to build a stronger district, city, and country.

Last week's terrorist events at the U.S. Capitol are still very raw for many of us. Both Republican and Democrat leaders have stated that democracy is a system wherein we can fiercely debate and disagree on policy and politics, but we cannot tolerate hate, violence and unlawfulness.

The National Association of School Psychologists has provided several resources to guide conversations regarding the current state of our democracy. As they state, "The 2020 election has generated strong opinions, emotions, and disagreements among many Americans, and it is occurring in the context of widespread, ongoing stress and anxiety from the pandemic; economic challenges; and racial injustice and unrest. Regardless of the outcome of the election, we have much to do to heal and move forward as a nation. As parents, caregivers, and educators, we have a critical responsibility to help children and youth feel safe and secure and to help them learn how to engage with others of differing viewpoints in a peaceful, tolerant, and respectful manner." Click on the following links for some resources that this organization provides for [parents](#) and [educators](#).

Vaccine Update: The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LADPH) has developed [a website dedicated to Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccine Distribution in Los Angeles County](#) to answer the public's questions and provide news and information about the COVID-19 vaccine. Based on guidance from the [California COVID-19 Vaccine Plan](#), the education sector is included in Phase 1B. LADPH is expected to begin Phase 1B distribution of the vaccine as early as February for all district employees (certificated and classified). More information will be forthcoming from LADPH.

California's Safe Schools for All Plan: The Governor has released a [California's Safe Schools for All Plan](#) to support and accelerate safe returns to in-person instruction starting in February,

with priority for returning the youngest children (transitional kindergarten through 2nd grade) and those with the greatest needs first. While all schools will be eligible to apply to receive funds by meeting certain criteria, schools must be in counties with a seven-day average of fewer than 25 cases per 100,000 residents to reopen. Los Angeles County's adjusted case rate is currently 77. Here is a new website with information about [California's Safe Schools for All Plan Hub](#). Burbank Unified, and many other school districts, have expressed our concern about the lack of details and rushed timeline, especially in light of the recent surge in COVID cases. We will provide more information as we receive it from the state.

State Budget Update: Last week Governor Newsom released his [2021-22 State Budget proposal](#) to the Legislature. While we applaud Governor Newsom for including one-time funding to reopen schools and a modest Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), we still need to advocate for deliberate short-term and long-term investments in public education. BUSD is forecasting future deficits due to declining enrollment, state mandated pension contribution increases (CalSTRS/CalPERS), and a lack of sufficient ongoing revenue. Without continued advocacy, we will be forced to continue to make budget reductions over the next two years.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day: As we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. this weekend, let us continue to reflect on his life and teachings. We should also be reminded that MLK Day is the only federal holiday designated as a national day of service to encourage all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities. Here are some resources:

- AmeriCorps Service Project Ideas: <https://americorps.gov/newsroom/events/mlk-day>
- Teaching Tolerance Resources: <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/the-best-of-our-dr-martin-luther-king-jr-resources>

By continuing to work together, we will build a stronger BUSD.

Take care,

Matt Hill, Ed.D.
Superintendent