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Superintendent
Matt Hill, Ed.D.

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Dear BUSD Students, Families and Employees:

We received the good news that school district employees will be eligible to start scheduling appointments to receive vaccines on March 1. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has stressed that appointments and doses of vaccines are still very limited at this time. Employees will have the opportunity to try to make appointments at the County vaccination sites, through their personal health care providers, or via our City of Burbank partnership. I want to thank our amazing nurses for agreeing to collaborate with the City to administer vaccines. As soon as the City of Burbank receives information about the number of vaccines they receive each week, we will directly contact eligible employees. Given the limited amount of vaccines, we will need to prioritize appointments for those who are working in-person at this time. We will continue to reach out to all District employees as we receive more vaccines. In the meantime, we will continue to advocate for the State and County to prioritize school district employees so that they can receive their vaccines as soon as possible.

I want to thank all of our employees for their dedication to our students this school year. It has been a stressful and ever-changing year for employees, students, and families. With this good news, I look forward to returning more students to campus.

I also want to thank our families for your continued communication with us and your advocacy for getting the best supports for your students. I acknowledge that Distance Learning is working well for some students, but it has not worked well for everyone. I hear and understand your concerns about the loss of in-person instruction and the effects isolation is having on your children. We are continuing to expand in-person activities and are planning to offer more in-person opportunities in the future. Below is an update on our progress.

- **Learning Pods:** We have extended our hours at Around the Bell (ATB) and ASES and have worked with our partners at the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and Afterschool Daze to do the same.
- **Special Education Learning Pods:** We have directly reached out to families so that they can start their special education learning pods on March 8. Additional students will be added to the learning pods on March 29.

- **Academic Intervention:** We have reached out to students to invite them to either virtual or in-person intervention courses. We are continuing to expand in-person interventions.
- **Athletics:** On Friday, State guidance was updated for outdoor youth sports. Our schools are currently working on implementing their plans for more athletic activities to return to campus.
- **End-of-year Activities:** In early April, the Los Angeles County Public Health Department is going to give us guidelines for graduations and promotions. We are planning for in-person ceremonies with limited audiences that follow health guidelines. If health conditions/guidelines change, we will implement contingency plans (i.e. drive-thru graduations/promotions). Your principals will be sharing more information over the next several weeks.
- **Summer School:** After Spring Break, we will be sharing more information about summer school. We are currently planning for an expanded summer school. Our preference is for in-person instruction, but we are designing a hybrid and Distance Learning model in case health conditions do not allow us to return to in-person instruction.

Elementary School Update

I have received several inquiries about the reopening of elementary schools. When we developed our plans in the summer and fall, we explored the different models that other school districts are now implementing. There are pros and cons with each model that must be taken into consideration. Other districts are moving to a hybrid model by:

- Rearranging classes with many students receiving a new teacher mid-semester,
- Bringing in substitute teachers, or
- Having teachers use additional cameras to teach in the classroom and teach at home (simultaneous instruction).

While some districts are implementing these models, we do not feel that changing teachers or introducing a new technology/instructional model with nine weeks left in the school year is the best way to address the social-emotional, mental health, and academic needs of our students. We believe we can work with our teachers to implement a model that will allow for more in-person opportunities safely and maintain our core instructional program for the remainder of the year.

It is also important to note that the federal and state governments are still requiring academic assessments this year. Students will be participating in testing in March and April. These mandated assessments will take time away from instructional and social-emotional supports.

Finally, while we have been able to implement safety measures and mitigate outbreaks by implementing our COVID Prevention Program, we are still seeing cases on our campuses. Please [click here](#) to see our case rates. The reason we are not seeing outbreaks arising from these

cases is that we must close a classroom or learning pod for 10-14 days when we have a case. Closing a classroom is another disruption to learning that we want to mitigate.

Plans for the 2021-22 School Year

As more vaccines are administered and case rates remain low, we are continuing to plan for students to fully return to in-person learning in August for the 2021-22 school year. We will reconvene our School Reopening Committee later this spring to develop our plan and a hybrid contingency in case health conditions change.

In closing, I understand there is a need and desire to “reopen” schools, but we must be specific about what reopening looks like and how we can accomplish it safely. Specifically, I am hearing that we need to provide more direct in-person academic supports for our students and social-emotional opportunities. We will continue to implement more of these opportunities over the coming weeks.

Take care,

Matt Hill, Ed.D.
Superintendent