



# **Return to Flexible In-Person Learning Recommendation**

October 6, 2020

# Background

- March 13, 2020 - distance learning
- Monumental shift for students, staff, and families
- Provided devices to all students TK-12
- Supported families with connectivity issues
- Fed Novato's children
- Learned and grown as an organization
- Proud of our efforts, acknowledging imperfections
- Working tirelessly to safely return students to campus

## Background (continued)

- NUSD has developed many reentry models to return students to campus
- Changing guidance from CDC, CDPH, MCPH has dashed these plans
- This has caused growing frustration
- Critically important decision that we must get right
- We have clear guidance
  - [Reopening In-Person Learning Framework for K-12 Schools](#) (California's COVID-19 Reopening Plan)
  - [Site Specific School Safety Planning Protocols](#)
  - [California Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#)

## Does this discussion impact the Virtual Learning Academy?

- No. We continue to offer the Virtual Learning Academy (VLA).
- Students enrolled in the VLA will continue to receive their instruction virtually
- If a family is interested in transitioning to the VLA, they can request a program transfer and we will do our best to honor that request
- To do so, families should email Jennifer Casper at [jcasper@nUSD.org](mailto:jcasper@nUSD.org)

What must we do prior to bringing students back on campus?



# Site-Specific School Safety Plans

30 components including but not limited to:

- Health screening protocols
- Clear communication protocols for potential scenarios of exposure of positive COVID cases
- Forward facing student desks with appropriate spacing between students and other students and students and teachers
- Campus entry and exit maps with protocols for drop off and pick up
- Strategies for staggered student movement when feasible
- Techniques to minimize congregate student movement in hallways (one-way traffic flow or walking lanes)
- Prohibiting large gatherings (e.g., assemblies)

## Site-Specific School Safety Plans (continued)

- Maximizing the use of outdoor learning spaces as much as possible
- Maximizing fresh airflow in classrooms and opening doors and windows as much as possible
- Limiting the sharing of equipment and cleaning between uses when necessary
- Routines for handwashing at pre-determined intervals
- Heightened cleaning expectations for our campuses
- Required use of face coverings as prescribed
- Limiting campus access to essential workers

# Samples of NUSD Safety Actions

- Custodial Training
- Electrostatic disinfectant sprayers for all sites
- Added custodial positions
- Personal protective equipment for all schools and classrooms
- Stand up and wall mounted hand sanitizer stations around campuses
- MERV 13 filters in HVAC units to where possible
- HEPA Filters for classrooms where MERV 13 filtration is not possible
- Three sided barriers for use when physical distancing is not practicable (for examples counselors, 1:1 assessment, etc.)
- Administrative walk throughs of school sites to assess compliance with the SSSPPs

# What Must Our Reentry Plan Include?

- What are the criteria allowing us to consider returning children to campus?
- What would pause this return plan?
- What would send a cohort or classroom back to distance learning?
- What would send a school back to distance learning?
- What would send the district back to distance learning?
- What are the recommended dates for students to return to campus?
- What is the rationale for deciding which students will return when?

# Criteria Allowing us to Consider Returning Students to Campus

- [The California Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#)
- Remaining in **red tier** or better
  - Adjusted case rate less than 7 cases per 100,000 county residents
  - Testing positivity rate less than 8%

# What would pause this return plan?

(Dictated by California's COVID-19 Reopening Plan)

- Marin County moving from the **red tier** to the **purple tier**

## What would happen?

- NUSD would pause reentry plan until Marin County returns to the **red tier** for two weeks
- Students on campus at the time of the move would remain on campus
- Students in distance learning would remain in distance learning
- Timelines would be adjusted accordingly

# What would send a cohort or classroom back to distance learning?

(Dictated by California's COVID-19 Reopening Plan)

- A confirmed positive case in a cohort

## What would happen?

- Confirm positive case
- Inform Marin County Public Health (MCPH)
- Isolate positive case by excluding from school for 10 days after onset of symptoms or positive test result
- Cohort would shift to distance learning for 14 days
- Support MCPH in contact tracing
- Clean and disinfect classroom space

# What would send a school back to distance learning?

(Dictated by California's COVID-19 Reopening Plan)

## Decisions will be based upon:

- The number of positive cases
- The percentage of teacher/student/staff positive for COVID-19
- Following consultation with MCPH

## What would happen?

- Learning model would shift to distance learning
- Decision to bring students back to campus made in partnership with MCPH

# What would send the district back to distance learning?

(Dictated by California's COVID-19 Reopening Plan)

- If 25% or more schools in the district have closed due to COVID-19 within 14 days, the entire district would shift to distance learning
- Determination would be made in partnership with MCPH

## What would happen?

- The entire district would shift to distance learning
- Decision on when to return to on campus learning would be made in partnership with MCPH

# What are the recommended dates for students to return to campus?

It is recommended that students return to campus as follows:

Phase	Date	Students Returning
1	October 26	Elementary Special Day Classes, Social Cognition Classes, Early Intervention, Transition Kindergarten, Kindergarten
2	November 9	First and second grades (1-2)
3	November 30	Third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades (3-6)
4	January 4	Seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth grades (7-10)
5	January 11	Eleventh and twelfth grades (11-12)

# Why Are We Not Returning Any Students Until October 26?

- We have one chance to do this. We need to do it right.
- We were not quite ready for an October 6 return.
- Air filtration and purification presented a large challenge:
  - Recent poor air quality
  - Ongoing fires
  - Middle of another bad fire season
  - Changing guidance on air filtration and purification
  - Winter is right around the corner
  - Inability to get filtration and purification materials in a timely manner

## What is the rationale for deciding which students return when?

It is difficult to accurately determine who is struggling the most during distance instruction or to make this decision within an equity lens.

### So what did we do?

- Staff looked to research on the developmental appropriateness of distance learning on students at differing ages and with differing abilities.
- Staff looked to the extensive experience of our team

## What is the rationale for deciding which students return when?

**Special Education** – It is extremely difficult to meet the needs of some Special Education students through distance learning.

- Our elementary special day classes and social cognition classes contain 16 or fewer students and are self-contained naturally creating their own cohort
- Early intervention students are very young and receive services very difficult to provide via distance learning due to student age
- Early intervention students are served in small cohorts

# What is the rationale for deciding which students return when?

## Our Youngest Students

- Distance learning is more appropriate as children get older
- Our youngest students need the most support that can only be provided in person
- These students need the most time to transition to their new learning environments
- Class size maximums are 24 or 30 depending on grade and these classes can be divided into two cohorts of 15 or less

# What is the rationale for deciding which students return when?

## Sixth Graders

- Sixth grade is very different from fifth grade
- Sixth graders are struggling in distance learning
- Research inside and outside of NUSD demonstrate that middle school students receiving “F” letter grades increases the likelihood of students not graduating high school

# What is the rationale for deciding which students return when?

## Middle and High School Students

- While imperfect, distance learning is more developmentally appropriate for middle and high school students
- Based upon recommendations from the reentry committee, the master schedule allowed for student choice in electives
- Master schedules allowed for students to be placed into the courses they chose or needed versus tracking of students into smaller cohorts
- This better meets student needs but increases the number of interactions on campuses
- Allowed for high school students to take advanced placement courses, career pathways, MSA, STEM, AVID, AFJROTC, etc.

# What is the rationale for deciding which students return when?

## High School Students

- See previous slide about middle and high schools
- The 4x4 model
  - Up to 4 year-long courses in a semester
  - Fast-paced learning
- Imbalanced semesters
  - 79 days in fall semester
  - 101 days in spring semester

## What Is Not Currently Contained in this Reentry Plan?

- Specific bell schedules for the varying school levels
- Specifics of what an instructional day will look like

## Why?

- We continue to negotiate with the Novato Federation of Teachers

## What happens if we don't come to agreement?

- Staff has prepared multiple schedules aligned with the contract between NFT and NUSD
- Staff has developed additional options based upon plans outlined by neighboring districts

# Discussion and Questions

