

Governing Board Members

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**NEWHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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December 11, 2020

Dear NSD Families,

First off, thank you for all the support you continue to provide your children and I appreciate those of you who have reached out to myself, our site principals, and our Governing Board in recent weeks to share your thoughts on this ever-evolving situation. My goal in this communication is to provide you with some updates as we prepare for in-person instruction. As you are aware, we continue to take guidance and direction from the County Department of Public Health and State. Based on all the guidance we have been given, they continue to reinforce that the most critical ways to keep adults and students safe are to practice at least 6 feet of social distancing, wear masks, and engage in frequent hand-washing. Beyond this, we have additional disinfecting measures and protocols that we have put in place when we reopen schools including signage, hand sanitizer stations, and hydrostatic sprayers just to name a few.

In my weekly calls with Dr. Ferrer she continues to say how impressed she and her staff have been with how schools across LA County are implementing these protocols during their site visits. As many of you have shared and Dr. Ferrer has called out, what families do outside of school is an entirely different story and one that we cannot control, but we can ensure you that protocols are in place at each school. Last week we had follow up conversations with our site administrators regarding the importance of regularly monitoring these protocols. We recognize that this is something we all have to keep at the forefront of our minds at all times.

In terms of the idea of testing students and staff, our District nurses continue to remind us that testing is only good in that moment. Someone could test negative in the morning and then be exposed later that day or have been asymptomatic at that time and if tested later that day or week, the results could turn up positive. They continue to remind us that social distancing, masks, and frequent hand washing are the best preventions. Connected to this topic is the news around vaccines. Last week I learned that the vaccines being tested now are only for adults 18 and over. This first round of vaccines will be released in phases. Most school staff should be part of phase 2, but the timing of that could be late spring or even summer depending on how many companies get approval according to Dr. Ferrer.

In terms of hybrid versus the digital learning academy model, we put those options in place to support the needs of all families. While it may not be ideal to potentially consider changing teachers if you are not comfortable returning to in-person teaching and learning once we move in that direction, I am confident that any teacher your child would be assigned to would do an outstanding job of meeting their needs. In our hybrid model, asking teachers to manage both in-person and distance learning at the same time would be an extreme challenge in most situations because of how teachers will be structuring their lessons. How teachers teach and prepare their lessons for in-person instruction versus distance learning are quite different.

Please know we are here to partner and support our families. I would encourage you to continue conversations with your principal if you have additional questions. We will continue to monitor the data and will be having further discussions next week at our Governing Board meeting around the launch of in-person instruction and our plans

moving forward. I promise to continue to keep families informed along the way. Stay safe and have a wonderful upcoming holiday season!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Pelzel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "P".

Jeff Pelzel  
Superintendent of Schools