



January 2, 2022

Superintendent's Message: School Closure Considerations and Dashboard

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff, Students and Community Members,

As we return to school amid growing COVID-19 cases in the community, you may be wondering what we are doing to keep students and staff safe for our planned school reopening this week. (Jan. 3 for elementary, Jan. 4 for secondary and SMASH). We are hearing from parents and staff with varying opinions, a few wondering about considering distance learning during this time and others suggesting a delayed start to school.

We are committed to continuing in-person instruction and have taken measures to ensure that we are doing so safely. As you are aware, we have updated our air systems, enhanced sanitation procedures, required face masks indoors and outdoors, continued conducting on-site weekly PCR testing, and have offered vaccination clinics to fight this relentless virus.

There is no specific case threshold at which state and local public health recommend a temporary closure of a classroom or school. Guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) states that "a temporary school closure due to COVID-19 should be a last resort and considered only after all available resources have been exhausted in an attempt to preserve in-person education."

Should a situation arise where our district is seeing high rates of in-school transmission, we will work with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and local public health officials to make decisions that support the health and safety as well as continuity of learning for our students. If we are experiencing operational challenges such as our ability to maintain sufficient staff to provide in-person instruction, we will also work with our guiding agencies to make appropriate decisions.

We understand this is a time of uncertainty and concern. We will work through this together to keep our students, families, and staff safe. As mentioned in my letter last week: ([English](#) / [Spanish](#)), **you may keep your child home from school with an excused absence if you would like to wait a few days to see on-site testing results for your site.**

If your student or someone else in the house is experiencing symptoms please come to John Adams Middle School on Monday 1/3/2022 between 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. for response testing and registration. For more information on response testing please see the following link: [English](#) / [Spanish](#).

You can help by ensuring your child is vaccinated (and boosted if applicable); testing for COVID-19 if they have been exposed or are presenting symptoms; and keeping them home if they are ill. If your child has not yet been vaccinated, please schedule them for one as soon as possible. We will be offering additional clinics this month on Saturdays. Please watch for information and registration codes. Other local vaccination sites are available online: <https://myturn.ca.gov/>. Cases of hospitalization of children are on the rise, and you can help reduce the spread and severity of children getting sick, if your child is vaccinated. Please provide your child's vaccination record to your school office. If you are a staff member, please provide your vaccination record to human resources.

We received an update from LACDPH on Friday, Dec. 31 at 5 p.m. regarding new masking guidelines that will go into effect in two weeks. We are reviewing these guidelines and will have more information to parents and staff in the next few days. We will adapt our safety standards as needed in order to remain responsive to the status of the pandemic and in alignment with our guiding agencies.

COVID Dashboard Status

We are working on our [Covid Dashboard](#) right now to streamline the input process for our staff and provide more reliable information to our families and staff. This process will take a bit of time as we resume school next week. In the meantime, we have the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH) website posted on our dashboard page. You can scroll down and search for "Santa Monica" or "Malibu" and see the list of schools, or enter a specific school.

As the pandemic continues to evolve, we are trying to respond and adapt quickly in order to keep our schools open in a safe manner. We appreciate your support and understanding, and will continue to keep you updated.

If you have any health or medical questions or concerns, please contact your school site nurse. If you have general comments, please submit through [Let's Talk](#).

Sincerely,
Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent