



# REOPENING RECOMMENDATION FOR THE DEL NORTE COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

August 6, 2020

## ACTION

The Board is asked to approve the final reopening plan for the 2020-2021 school year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting guidance and mandates.

In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Board took unanimous action on March 15, 2020 to close school facilities to students, based on Executive Order N-26-20 by Governor Gavin Newsom, and to embark on what would become a three month effort to provide “crisis learning” to over 3,600 students with meals and “high quality educational options” (per the Order).

## REOPENING RECOMMENDATION

A phased reopening of campuses beginning in Phase 1 on the Continuum of Education for Del Norte Schools and culminating in the implementation of Phase 3, as described on the Continuum and approved by the Board of Trustees

Throughout May, June, July, and now into August, the California Department of Public Health, the California Department of Education, the California State Board of Education, and the Del Norte Public Health Office have provided guidance, information, and recommendations regarding the beginning of school for the 2020-2021 school year.

The most recent of these documents have been provided by the California Department of Public Health and are the definitive guidance in regards to safely reopening schools. These documents, however, are broad and, at times, vague, and require that districts and county offices of education implement reopening plans “only with local health officer approval.” (CDPH, “*COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE: Schools and School-Based Programs*,” 3 August 2020)

All mandatory state guidance may be found at [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov).

Additional recommendations are available at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov) or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

**“California public schools . . . will determine the most appropriate instructional model, taking into account the needs of their students and staff, and their available infrastructure.”**  
***CDPH, 2020***

# Recommendation

## Adjusting the Calendar

In order to provide adequate time for the training and supports for our students, teachers, and families, the current school year calendar is inadequate. Three (3) days currently exist in which all certificated staff training related to regular, annual and COVID-19 mandated personnel, safety, distance learning, instructional practices, and other topics may be given. Classified staff only have one (1) day currently available on calendar to receive these same trainings.

*It is recommended that the Board approve staff to consult with the bargaining units and create a calendar that 1) increases the professional development and planning days at the beginning of the year to the fullest extent possible and 2) does not negatively impact the unrestricted general fund.*

## A Measured Approach to Reopening

The [Continuum of Education](#) identifies four (4) phases of school openness to be considered in relation to the California [Resilience Roadmap](#).

- Phase 1- Distance Learning for All
- Phase 2- Distance Learning for All with special needs and at-risk populations attending in smaller cohorts for targeted, in-person instruction, intervention, and services
- Phase 3- Blended Learning/Hybrid with 50% of K-8 students attending in person two days per week and engaging in distance learning three days per week, and high school students maintaining Phase 2 instruction  
*The Distance Learning program will remain an option for all interested students*
- Phase 4- All Students Return with health and safety measures in place reflecting guidance from CDPH and local public health  
*The Distance Learning program will remain an option for all interested students*

In reviewing published documents, gaining further guidance, and collaborating with local and regional partners on the burden placed by the State on the District in terms of safety mitigation plans, training, and equipment, contracting, testing, facilities rearrangement/reorganization, etc., of learning mandates regarding attendance, student work audits and verification of participation, staff collaboration and lesson design and delivery, of technology access and equity, etc., district and site administration have reservations regarding the ability of the District to reopen, with students, on August 24.

Students need to be in school, with credentialed teachers and high quality support staff members to fully benefit from education; however, everyone is also aware of the considerable impact and limitations that the response to COVID-19 is having in our community and, most especially, with our youngest and most vulnerable population- our students.

*To ensure adequate time to train, equip, and otherwise prepare for the arrival of our students on campus, it is recommended that the Board further approve the reopening timeline as follows\*:*

- *Phase 1 through September 11, 2020 for All*
- *Phase 2 through October 2, 2020 for All*
- *Phase 3 beginning October 5, 2020 for K-8 with Phase 2 for DNHS*

*\* Transition between these phases would require that the County of Del Norte is not on the State watch list at the time of transition and that the transition is supported by the local public health officer based on COVID-19 epidemiological data, as required by CDPH.*

# Recommended Action

Approve the reopening timeline as presented and direct district staff to consult with bargaining units to create a calendar to expand professional development and planning days at the beginning of the year, so long as those plans do not negatively impact the Unrestricted General Fund.