

## District Communication Feb 5 2021

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

On Wednesday of this week, we welcomed students in five more in-person classes at Faller Elementary, Murray Middle School, Monroe Middle School, and Burroughs High School. Due to incredible efforts of faculty and staff, these additional classes were implemented smoothly and successfully.

Since November, we have been working very hard to bring as many students into the classroom as we can, given all the mandates, forces, and challenges that we must work through. We end the week with 170 students, in 22 in-person classes, at 7 of our 10 school sites.

This is good, but not good enough.

Is it safe for students to learn on campus? **Yes.** So long as appropriate measures are taken, and our safety plan is followed, bringing students back to school is the most important thing we can do at this time. Simply stated, there are critical and unmet needs that compel us to return students to the classroom.

It has never been absolutely safe to learn on campus, and it never will. In society, we make calculated, reasonable, and sensible decisions about our level of safety as we live productive and meaningful lives. For those who do not wish to return to in-person learning in the very near future, we will remain committed to providing Distance Learning (DL) as an option.

Sierra Sands will always do everything that is reasonable and sensible so that our community's children have the opportunity to grow and thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. It is a civic and moral duty that we partner with families to help produce our next generation of adult American citizens.

There is no one single factor that assures safety; but one significant resource that has not rolled out the way that we all anticipated is the vaccine. We are working very closely with the county to secure vaccines for district staff as quickly as possible. The good news is that educators are next on the prioritized list. But we should all recognize that the vaccine, alone, is not the only deciding factor for moving forward with in-person plans. Rather, it is the use of all of the various safety plan measures that allows a reasonable and calculated return.

Where do we go from here? On December 30, Gov. Newsom announced his pledge to get kindergarten-5th graders back into school first, as the research points to the relative safety and urgency of getting those youngest learners back in the first major wave. While the state has not yet finalized the details for the Governor's pledge, we in Sierra Sands are responding with total commitment for getting our youngest learners back in the classroom very soon. We are working very hard on this effort and you can expect updates in the near future.

Sincerely,  
Dave Ostash  
Superintendent