



Santa Ana Unified School District

Jerry Almendarez
Superintendent of Schools

August 25, 2020

Dear SAUSD Community,

Sunday, August 23, 2020 marked the first day that Orange County was removed from the California Department of Public Health's COVID-19 monitoring list. This is an extremely positive development and a testament to the local communities that have pulled together to reinforce the effectiveness of face coverings and physical distancing. It also brings schools within our county a step closer to resuming in-person instruction.

But we are not there yet. Orange County must remain off the state's watch list for 14 consecutive days, which, on our current trajectory, takes us just beyond Labor Day weekend. However, it is important to note that county health officials are cautioning that transmission rates continue to exceed state thresholds in specific ZIP codes, including many within the city of Santa Ana, creating localized hotspots where in-person instruction is not recommended at this time.

The top priority of our District and our Board of Education remains the safety and well-being of our students, parents, staff and overall community. Any decision we make to resume in-person instruction must take into account the unique needs and challenges our community faces during these unprecedented times. In order for our District to resume any in-person instruction, the rate of COVID-19 cases must decrease to safer levels. We are steadily working as a community to reach this goal. And when we do so, our students will begin returning to our campuses.

In the meantime, we continue to work to offer a rigorous distance learning model for all our students, along with providing the technology and support necessary so students can continue learning safely at home. At the same time, we continue to prepare our campuses for in-person instruction. We are installing plexiglass dividers, air purifiers, hand sanitizing stations, and other safety precautions. We have a stockpile of masks, gloves and face shields ready for our students and staff when they return.

I know many parents and community members would like a timeline of when SAUSD students might return to campuses. Right now, that remains a moving target. But I can assure you we are working tirelessly towards this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Almendarez".

Jerry Almendarez
SAUSD Superintendent

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