

## **Health & Safety Steering Committee Meeting Notes - January 13, 2022**

Read full meeting agenda and member list [here](#).

Superintendent Booker thanked everyone for attending the meeting on short notice and provided an update on [PUSD's COVID status and operations](#) following the return of students from Winter Break. Details of note:

- The District is waiting on the California Department of Public Health to change its definition of 'fully vaccinated' to include the booster shot. If it doesn't do so by the end of next week, it may be mandated for staff.
- If exposed, staff may return to work if they have had their booster shot.
- The District has the availability to contact students when they become eligible for a booster shot.
- With changes in isolation guidelines, if students are still testing positive on Day 6, they should just isolate for the full ten days to avoid wasting COVID tests.
- Needs to be communicated to families that after isolating for five days, it's not guaranteed their student will return on or after Day 6.
- Families may use a negative test from their physician to return to school.
- Some teachers across the District are using various methods to keep in touch with students who are absent, but there needs to be agreements with APT for anything formal to take place.
- PUSD staff are required to wear n95 or kn95 masks this week and next. Cannot mandate for students as the District does not have sufficient supply given the masks' recommended one-day use. Priority given to staff since in-person instruction is dependent on their being in class.
- There is uncertainty as to whether the data exists yet to show wearing surgical grade masks provide greater protection for students following a positive test.
- A n95 kn95 mask mandate for students would be difficult for younger students as it would be challenging to ensure a proper fit.

### **Discussion Topics:**

Outdoor Masking - No requirement for secondary schools. Superintendent stated he would revisit the requirement for elementary students upon reaching the January 14th deadline for submitting proof of vaccination. Discussion points included:

- Unmasking outdoors means little if students are grouped together. The expectation is social distancing is not being practiced during or after school while outdoors.
- The metric this group used to consider lifting the outdoor mask requirement was 5/100,000 in Alameda County. That number is now 250/100,000. Now is not the time to take masks off.

- This surge wasn't a surprise to anyone and is actually worse than many expected.
- Isolation periods may now be shorter, but the expectation is you mask up when you return to school.
- Now is not the right time to pull back on requirements. This surge will pass and can discuss again when conditions are better.
- A huge misconception remains that you are safe when outdoors. Communication must include this is only the case when adequate distancing is in place.
- It's understood that now is not the best time to ease up, but with our high vaccination rates and a lack of socialization that our students are suffering from, as soon as cases go down we need to drop the outdoor requirements.
- Most of the cases we are seeing are among fully vaccinated secondary students. Given the surge we are under, it would be best to bring the outdoor requirement back until the February break.
- Can discuss new metrics at our next meeting when we are past the peak of the surge.
- Is there really any point to masking outdoors without mandating n95 or kn95 masks? Cloth masks aren't preventing transmission so what are we trying to achieve?
- The school environment is unique but also risky depending on how students are situated.
- We want to keep students in school - but also safe in school.

Consensus of the group is to continue outdoor mask requirement for elementary students and reinstate requirement for secondary students until discussion can continue at next meeting on January 26th.

**Next meeting - Wednesday, January 26th, 8:30am**