



El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career

PRESS RELEASE

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El Monte Union to Finalize Back-to-School Plans for 2020-21 School Year

EL MONTE – The El Monte Union Board of Trustees will consider adopting a blended learning model – in which students receive a combination of virtual and in-classroom instruction – for the 2020-21 academic year, which begins Aug. 18.

The Board of Trustees will review the District’s Reopening of Schools Plan – which includes the proposed instructional program, specific plans for distancing of students, cleaning of classrooms and equipment, safety and health protocols, student transportation, preparation of meals, student and family engagement, and social-emotional support – during its virtual board meeting on July 15, which may be viewed live [here](#).

Due to the impacts of COVID-19 and the surge of positive cases across the state and Los Angeles County, school districts are developing flexible teaching and learning plans that are not only adaptable to the continuously changing environment caused by the pandemic, but also uphold the education, safety and well-being of students and staff.

“We are quickly approaching the start of the school year and COVID-19 is, unfortunately, part of our everyday reality,” Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. “I know there is no perfect learning system for a high school setting under these conditions and there are a lot of challenges we must grapple with. But we are forging ahead and planning appropriately to ensure the continued safety of our students and staff and meet the needs of all as best as we can.”

Under [state law](#), the District must engage in daily instruction, monitor student progress and maintain school connectedness.

As part of the recommended blended learning option for fall 2020, students will physically attend school two days a week on alternating days, taking three 80-minute classes during the first nine weeks (fall 1 term) and three 80-minute classes during the next eight weeks (fall 2 term) for a total of six classes over the 17-week semester. Students will engage in virtual learning the rest of the week. One day a week would be dedicated to teacher planning, collaboration, staff meetings and teacher-student engagement. Families will still have the option to pursue distance learning only. Grab-and-go meals will be provided.

As guidelines continue to evolve, however, adjustments will be made to the learning plan, including reverting to a distance learning only model if necessary and upon Board approval.

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To help guide efforts to create safe learning environments, the District created a Reopening of Schools Taskforce, which includes administrators, teachers, union representatives, classified staff, parents and students. The District also solicited feedback from students, parents and staff to gauge their preferences for instruction and comfort level with returning to school (survey results can be found [here](#)).

The District hosted a [virtual community forum](#) on June 29, providing parents, students and staff with information on blended learning, distance learning only and traditional face-to-face learning in a classroom setting, which would be difficult to maintain with social distancing and safety measures in place.

Factors being considered when deciding on an instructional model include the classroom space available to ensure social distancing; meeting instructional minutes-per-day requirements; time required to sanitize classrooms between classes or groups; technology availability and access; K-8 school schedules, family needs and childcare; number of families who may want 100% distance learning; personal protective equipment and staffing needs; transportation; physical education activities; and nutrition schedules.

The most critical determining factor to how schools may reopen and operate is state and county health orders, which are revised often in response to spikes in community transmission.

The District is working with the California Health Department, which has released initial guidelines for re-opening schools; the Los Angeles County Office of Education, which released its planning framework; the LA County Department of Public Health, which will soon release guidance for schools within the county; as well as labor partners to safely reopen schools.

“We know students and teachers have the best opportunity to make connections and achieve success through a traditional learning model,” Zuniga said. “But I know our committee has the expertise, knowledge and research to come up with the best option for our students and staff this fall.”

Ongoing updates on the reopening of schools – along with all questions and [answers](#) from the virtual meeting – are available [here](#).

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The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.