

March 17, 2021 – District Update – Video Transcript:

Hello everyone, John Garcia, Superintendent of Downey Unified School District here with some exciting news. As a result of last night's Board meeting, we have something to share and to do, that I'd like to pass it to the Board of Education President Mr. D Mark Morris.

Thank you, Dr. Garcia. At last night's Board of Education meeting, the Board of Education voted unanimously to reopen in a Hybrid Model for all grades in our school system on Monday, March the 29th. We are very excited for this turn of events and feel it will be a great blessing for the Downey community, and particularly, for our students and teachers.

Thanks Mr. Morris, appreciate it. As Mr. Morris shared, the 29th is a big day for us in Downey Unified. Our approximately ten thousand students who have chosen to return in a Hybrid Model will be back with us. We fully understand and will continue to offer a Full Distance Learning program for those families that chose to stay in Full Distance. In addition to all of that exciting news, we know that many of you who have high school students know that our athletics programs started up in the last week or so as well. Those metrics continue to move and we are now looking toward our indoor sports and I want to wish the best of luck to all of our teams at both comprehensive high schools. Go Downey. Go Warren. Very excited our student athletes and our extracurricular programs are getting back on track.

In addition to that, tomorrow night, or the 18th. I'm filming this on St. Patrick's Day. The 18th, will start our Welcome Back Meetings or our Informational Meetings for our Elementary students who have chosen to return in a Hybrid Model. Each school has published their particular meeting times. Regarding our Middle School and High Schools. Those who are choosing to return in a Hybrid Model. Those Informational nights will begin next week and take place throughout that. There's a lot of information and we want to make sure that you continue to know that we have our COVID website page that has our Informational Video about all the preparations that we are making in anticipation of return for our students on the 29th. As well as our COVID Safety Guidebook along with the schedules for the Elementary students and for the Secondary students, our Middle school and High schoolers, who are coming back as well. The Secondary schedule has not changed from what was in place back in November that was published in the original Guidebook. However, if you're an Elementary person, Elementary parent, make sure that you look at the new Elementary schedule that was adjusted to keep students with teachers and teachers with students and keep those classroom families that have been formed throughout the course of the year together.

As we move forward, I can't thank all of you enough for your grace, your patience and your flexibility. Not only with us, but with each other, with everything that we are going through. We truly are in times we've never been before, but what we do see is the light at the end of this tunnel. After a long year. Actually, yesterday marked the 12 month of our first day of missing school. March 16th, was that first Monday when we thought we were only going to be gone for two weeks, in the beginning, and that turned into six weeks, which turned into the rest of the 19-20 school year, which has now since turned into the first three quarters of the 20-21 school year. We're so excited to continue, to not only offer our Full Distance program, but really to be able to welcome 10,000 of our students back on campus starting Monday, March 29th.

Thanks again to all of you for your support and everything you do for our Downey Unified family. And in Downey Unified, we are a family. We appreciate all of you our parents, our amazing students, our community support and our staff who have worked so hard over the course of the last 12 months to get to this point where we are now and continue to move us forward. We look forward to ending this school year very strong and really continue to springboard into our summer programs and then into a fall and hopefully by August we'll be ready for some type of a full return. We'll see what conditions are at those times. Thank you everyone, appreciate all of you very much and Happy St. Patrick's Day to all.