

Video Transcript: Message from the Superintendent – May 7, 2021

Hello, Downey Unified family. John Garcia Superintendent of the school district here, coming to you with an update about what's happening in the last few weeks and in the coming months. First and foremost, we're in the last three weeks of our school year and we have so many exciting things happening in the next few weeks. Especially our in-person high school graduations and eighth grade promotions. We're going to be able to do an in-person graduation everyone, not only for the class of 2021. We're splitting up our comprehensive high schools over two nights. But also, we're able to now get our students from the class of 2020, to be able to walk across that stage and get the recognition that they deserve. We're so excited. We've had about half of the class of 2020 respond for each of our comprehensive high schools, and we're so looking forward to seeing them. We know it's been a long year and last year was a very very tough year for them. But we're excited to offer, not only the class of 2021 in person graduations, but also the class of 2020. Now we are limited. Each class will only be able to get four tickets, per person. It's unfortunate, but current to Health Department orders say we can only have about a third of capacity in our stadium, so each graduate or promoter from the eighth grade, will only get four tickets. But we will be streaming the high schools for sure. We're currently working on being able to stream our 8th grade promotions as well, but we will definitely be streaming our high school graduations for all of those family members who aren't able to be in the stadium with them.

Transitioning and moving forward, we're going to offer more summer school programs this year than we ever have. An incredibly robust summer school offering. We know we've got a lot of work to do. We are so excited to have had our students back on our campuses since March 29th. It's been amazing to walk around and see students back on our campuses. We know many of you are still in Full Distance. We'll continue to offer that program as well until the end of the school year. We have some Full Distance offerings for summer school, as well. So, hey, we've got a lot of work to do but things are getting back to normal which is very very exciting for all of us. Speaking of next year, I absolutely want to share with you that we are planning for a full return in August. We're very excited about that. We really feel that continuing in the path that we are on in the state of California and Los Angeles County, we will absolutely be able to offer a full program like we used to in Downey Unified. Now we know there are some questions about Distance Learning. Will we continue to offer Distance Learning? I want to share with you, those that are interested, a couple of things. Number one is, it is our goal to be able to offer a full Distance Learning program for next year because we know not everybody is ready to come back or will be. But the state of California has not authorized us to do that past June the 30th. So, as we move forward into the 21-22 school year, we don't know. That criteria has to be set by Sacramento. We are waiting for guidance from the state of California. We will keep you posted. But in the meanwhile, what we will be doing are two things. We're going to be sending out a survey in the next couple of weeks, asking what your preference is, assuming we are looking at a full return back to normal school what it used to look like before March 13 of

last year. We will be asking you what your plans are would be, if we are back full time in August. The second step with, that with that, will be in July. After we know and understand what the state of California will allow us to do, after June 30th, then we will circle back for you to confirm what it is that you selected in May, when we send you that survey. So, I want to share it's a two-step process. The first one will come out in the next couple weeks, asking what your plans are if we are able to return full-time, assuming we are, that's what we're planning for. And then the second time in July, asking you to confirm your choice or to change your choice, at that particular time, based on where conditions are and what the guidelines are in July as we get closer to the beginning of the 21-22 school year.

Lastly, I also want to recognize, and first and foremost, thank our parents. Our amazing parents, our amazing community. But parents, we know that not only has this last 14 months been challenging for us as educators and our staff in Downey Unified, but for you as well. And I want to thank you for all of your support, of your children, of Downey Unified School District, of everything that we do in Downey Unified. Parents, you have been nothing short of amazing these last 14 months. We can't thank you enough and acknowledge and recognize all of your work and support with your children as partners with us in education and us as partners with you as parents.

I also want to recognize our staff. We have so many different staff appreciation weeks this particular month. We have Nurses Day, we have California Day the Teacher coming up on May the 12th, we have our Classified Employees Week coming up in the next couple of weeks. So, in Downey Unified we put all of those together. And we've partnered with our employee associations and our Personnel Commission, to recognize our staff. And so, to our staff, I want to say thank you so much for everything that you do. You are amazing Downey Unified. We as the Downey Unified family. It's been a rough road these last 14 months, but we have gone through this together, we're coming out the other side of it, everything is headed in the right direction and we are so excited to get back to normal and continue offering new opportunities for our students, for our families, in everything we do. Thank you everyone. Thank you, Downey Unified family. You are amazing. It is a pleasure and it is a gift to be here as a part of this, and on behalf of the Board of Education and myself, I want you to know how much we appreciate all of you. Thanks everyone and have a good one.