

## **District Update – July 14, 2021 – Video Transcript**

Hello Downey Unified family. John Garcia, Superintendent of Downey Unified here. Coming to you on Wednesday July 14. So everything we talked about today will be current as of today. Things continue to change in this environment, but I'm going to give you the latest update because I haven't had an opportunity to interact with you since the end of May, when we did our video toward the end of the school year. First and foremost, I am happy to share that our summer schools are wrapping up this week, with our high school summer school ending tomorrow on Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup>. Our elementaries ended a couple of weeks ago as did our middle schools ended last week. We had the biggest summer schools in the history of Downey Unified between our In-Person Models and our Distance Learning Models, we were able to reach almost 10,000 students this summer has a part of our summer programs and we're so excited about the way those went. The energy by the staff, the energy by the students who were participating in those, has been absolutely tremendous. So very excited about that.

I know that many of you have questions regarding what's happening with the state of California and what are the updates in relationship to that. Well last week, the CDC came out with some guidance regarding masks in schools; however, their guidance said that it is not necessary. But I want to share with you, as of today July 14, the California Department of Public Health is saying that we will continue to use masks in indoor settings at our school sites. So as of now, we are looking forward to that fall return in-person, utilizing masks, in a minimum indoor setting. So, as of now August 11<sup>th</sup> when our students return in-person we are looking at continuing mass protocols indoors. I want you to also know, we will continue also the same cleaning protocols that we had in place when our students came back in Hybrid at the end of March. And remember, we had over 10,000 of our students in schools continuing with our cleaning protocols and making sure that our school sites are safe and clean for all.

I also want to share with you regarding Distance Learning options for next year. So I want to make sure to understand, our default option is students are coming back in-person, which we are so excited for. In our last video, I shared that the state had only authorized Distance Learning through June the 30<sup>th</sup>. So the state of California last week passed legislation regarding Online Learning for fall, beginning fall of 2021. That Online Learning protocol will be made available for students who would be put at risk by in-person instruction, as determined by their parent or guardian. So, as parents and guardians, you have to make the determination. Work with your family physician or work with medical professionals to understand what risks might be, what risks might be present for your child, but again that is a decision by the parent or the guardian. So we will have an Online Learning option for our students in the fall, now that we understand what those guidelines are.

And if you recall at the end of May, we sent out a preliminary survey asking our families: are you in person or, if there is a Distance Learning option authorized, an Online Learning option authorized by the state of California, is that something that you would be interested in because you feel like your student would be put at risk. So, we will be sending out the follow up survey this Friday July 16<sup>th</sup> and at that link will be active for one week until Friday July the 23<sup>rd</sup>. In which we are asking you as Part 2 of that initial survey, to confirm your choice that you made in May. We want to make sure we can accommodate all of our students in the fall but we need to know what is going on with our families and what you as parents and guardians are planning for your students.

So again, we want to make sure and I want to remind you that window closes, it opens on July 16th and closes July 23<sup>rd</sup>. Please, please give us your response as soon as possible because we will be monitoring it as the week goes on. In addition to that the state last week also passed some legislation in regarding to students who struggled significantly last year. And whose parents are interested and looking at remedial measures for their students. So if you would like to do some research on Assembly Bill 104 that will explain all of your options as parents. There's things related to there for high school students in regard to pass and no pass, some flexibility there. Some other options in regard to interventions that are available for all of our students TK through 12. So again, I encourage you. We've already gotten calls at the district office, some folks asking questions, but Assembly Bill 104 spells that out for our families regarding the pass/no pass option, as well as other intervention options for our families.

That being said, we're a little over halfway through our summer and I want to say thank you so much to our amazing staff who worked with our students, those almost 10,000 students who came during the summer programs. We had an amazing, enormous amount of staff working with our students. The amount of energy that was present between students, staff, the parents who were dropping off and picking up and being able to interact with staff again. Just really, really want to thank our staff, but I also want to thank you as our parents, as our community, for all of your support, for all the work you've done with your children. You've done an enormous amount of work the last 16 months, we all have, and we know this has been a huge, huge burden on parents as well. And I just can't thank you enough for your partnership, for support, for collaborating with us as professionals who are dedicated to your students. We like to say that our *Students Deserve The Best*. They have the best families; they have the best parents and we work every single day to provide the best for them in Downey Unified. Thank you parents, thank you community, thank you to all of our staff members and absolutely thank you to our amazing students for everything that you have done, that you continue to do. We will absolutely keep you posted in the coming weeks as our August 11 start of school gets nearer. We will continue to keep you posted as things change at the State and the Local level. Thanks again everyone. Have a great rest of your summer and we'll talk soon.