

## District Update – August 17, 2021

### Video Transcript

Good evening everyone. John Garcia, Superintendent of Downey Unified School District here providing you an update. As I record this, it's the evening of August 17th and everything that I share is current as of today and this evening. First and foremost, I want to start off with welcoming everybody back officially to the school year. I know I sent out a letter last night but wanted to provide a video update and we are so excited to have 90% of our students back on our campuses in Downey Unified. It's great to see kids back in school and back in their seats. We also continue to provide robust online programs, for that 10% of our students, who wanted to continue with their online education. We opened a 14th online elementary school for this year. We continue to provide full online offerings at our secondary school sites, very excited about.

There were some bumps along the way, I'm going to be honest about that. Our first day of school, unfortunately our web filter was down, and we know a lot of our devices particularly our iPads at the elementary and middle, were not able to connect to the to our network. We absolutely apologize for that, it was horrible timing for our web filter company, but they were able to get it back up after a couple hours. I understand that Thursday and Friday, and the last couple of days, have gone very well in regard to students doing their Wellness Checks, checking in, getting onto campus very smoothly.

Also heard some feedback and some questions about class sizes. What's happening with that. Every year, at the beginning of every year, when we start school, and it's in a couple of years since we've done this, so I get it. We have students who move in over the summer and check in at the beginning of school year; we have some students who move out during the summer and don't check out. So, we don't know exactly always who's coming and who's not going to be on campus that particular year. It takes about two weeks to stabilize things, to get those things balanced, out settled in. We are in that process now; our goal is to get all of those things balanced and stabilized by the end of this week. So again, it usually takes a couple weeks we are accelerating all of that work to get our classes balanced and stabilized. But again, want to thank everybody for their grace, their patience, their flexibility as we continue to work through our challenges and have also had some great successes along the way with our students back in school full time. Very excited about that.

I want to continue to encourage people to look at getting vaccinated. For those of you who continue to be interested, we are having another vaccination clinic this Thursday or a week from Thursday, on August 26th at Downey High School from 3:30 to 7:30 PM. You can go on [myturn.ca.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov) to get register. Again, I want to remind everybody, that we encourage you. The health orders in relationship to students and adults are very very different for those who are vaccinated, and those who are unvaccinated. We understand there are some very important reasons by folks may not be able to get vaccinated but want to continue to encourage that as a school district.

Earlier this evening, we had a Board of Education meeting and there were some adjustments made to our current protocols as we look toward what's happening in LA County and working with our partners at the LA County Department of Public Health. We know that there will be some venues that will be going toward outdoor masks potentially later on this week, and we are going to follow suit with that by revising our protocol and updating our protocol to ask all of our students and staff to wear their masks, not only indoors but outdoors as well, unless they are eating or drinking. So again, I want to make sure and provide that update and emphasize that our mask update for Downey Unified has been revised to wear masks outside as well, unless eating or drinking. So, we can continue to find updated protocols on our Board of Education webpage, our COVID-19 web page for Downey Unified. The Return to School Presentation, presented this evening, is on our Board of Education webpage on [dusd.net](https://dusd.net) website. Please, I encourage all of you to go to review that, it gives a nice synopsis of conditions as of today what our revised protocols are and where we are moving forward.

So again, I want to encourage you to utilize our website from the Board page, but then also our COVID-19 page because it's got our COVID-19 Dashboard with all of our safety protocols as well as updated regularly, cases at each site, for staff for students. We know that's another question out there what's happening in my school, in regard to cases and want to

continue to emphasize that all of that information is readily available on our COVID-19 webpage on our website. I also want to ask all of you to continue to give us your grace, your patience and your flexibility, not only with us, but with each other as we continue to navigate these things together. Conditions in this environment, as they have since March 13 of 2020, continue to be very fluid and are changing constantly. We provide written updates, I provide these video updates to get you the best quality information I can in a timely manner and always if you have any questions, you can work with your local school or do an email submission to our DUSD website and we will get back to you as soon as we possibly can.

Again, Downey Unified family/families, it is great to be here. I want to thank all of you for a wonderful start to the school year, it's just so good to see our kids back in school, it's so good to see our kids online learning in robust elementary and secondary environments. Thanks for everything. Have a good evening and let's have a great school year together.