

Video Transcript District Update – March 9, 2022

Hello Downey Unified. Superintendent Dr. John Garcia here with an update about where we are in Downey Unified. At last night's Board of Education meeting, the Board made the decision to align with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Meaning, that starting Saturday, which effectively is Monday for our students and staff when they come back, that masks will be optional in our schools and not required. I want to make sure that we are understanding, that again, mask continue to be recommended but they are not mandatory. And I want to remind all of us that regardless of whatever personal choice that a student or a family makes, to continue to be respectful to one another, at all times. As we work through Downey Unified, we're constantly working with our students about Character Counts and Respect is one of the Six Pillars of Characters. So, I want to remind everyone, within that, to respect each other's personal choice because they're individuals who feel strongly about wearing and those who feel strongly about not wearing and it is that family choice and that individual choice. We always continue with the health and safety of our students in mind and to that end we will be continuing with our Daily Screener moving forward. At this point we don't have a specific expiration date, but we want to at least do that at minimum through Spring Break. And then we'll continue on with that. We feel like the Daily Screener is an important part of what it is we're doing, in regard to symptoms and what's happening.

As we look toward the next year, we also have one other thing that's happening. Many of our families this year chose to be online. We have started an Online Elementary School, many of our middle school and high school families are continuing online with their teachers from their school sites, or through our Downey Virtual Academy, and we do anticipate that we will continue to do that next year. In the next couple of weeks, those of you who are online, elementary and secondary, will get a survey asking if you want to continue online into next year. If you are not online currently, but you think you may want to be, please call us here at the district office and talk to our Secondary Education Division. The survey will only go out to those families who are currently online at the elementary and at the secondary level. We will have online programs next year as well. As we continue to get that data, we will keep you posted as to what's happening.

With all of that being said, I want to again circle back because I do think this is important. Downey Unified family, it's been a long two years. For those of us who remember that day like it was yesterday, remember vividly, March 13, 2020, this Sunday, will be two years ago. We have been through an incredible journey together these last couple of years, but we've been able to get through it by showing each other grace, patience and flexibility. Being a part of the Downey Unified family is something that I treasure personally, and I know that all of us do as well. Continuing to support each other, respect each other and move forward together as a family these last two years, has been absolutely paramount to what we've been able to provide for our students under challenging circumstances. As we move forward and getting back to more a greater level of normalcy, I really look forward to continuing to work with all of you and reminding all of us that our Kids Deserve the Best and in Downey Unified, we work every single day to be better for your kids than we were yesterday and better this year than last year and continue to grow and be better every single day on behalf of our students. Thank you so much Downey Unified families for all of your support. I want to thank our Downey Unified staff. Our teachers, our bus drivers, our cafeteria workers, our instructional assistants, everybody along, our administrators and thank all of them for all their work and continuing to move forward together. Have a great day. Talk soon.