



Ukiah Junior Academy

Grapevine

July 28, 2020

Principal's Corner

UJA School Opening Update

Last night the UJA school board met in person for the first time in months. Our teachers were invited to attend as well. We met outside and kept our distance. It was wonderful to meet together in person!

I summarized for those present where our county stands with Covid-19, our status with the state and what that means for UJA school reopening plans. I have been told that today Mendocino County will be officially placed on the state Monitor List. Governor Newsom's statement on July 17 reads as follows;

“Schools located in counties that are on the Monitoring List must not physically open for in-person for instruction until their county has come off the Monitoring List for 14 consecutive days.”

However, in the next paragraph Governor Newsom also states;

“There is a single exception. Local health officers may grant a waiver to allow elementary schools to reopen in-person instruction. . .”

Our teachers were asked to make a statement expressing their thoughts about reopening school in-person for the coming school year. Board members were asked to give their thoughts on this as well. All our teachers share the desire to open the school year with in-person instruction and the willingness to do whatever it takes to do so

safely. Board members also expressed their desire to safely reopen UJA. We all shared our concern for the emotional impact that continued distance learning could have on our children and felt that getting our children back in school safely to be a priority.

So, how will we proceed?

We will be vigorously pursuing obtaining a waiver to reopen school with in-person instruction through the Mendocino County Health Department. I plan to meet with our new county health officer, Dr. Coren, personally to get his feedback and develop a plan to safely reopen for in-person instruction on Monday, August 24. (We pushed back our start date a few days in order for us to effectively prepare for a safe reopening of our campus.)

You can be assured that we will do everything we can to reopen for in-person instruction in a safe, practical manner. We will be developing our reopening plan in consultation with our local county health department and expect to approve that plan at our next board meeting on August 10. This plan will be created in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the California Department of Public Health released on July 17, 2020. <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-schools.pdf>

One aspect of our reopening plan will be maintaining our small class sizes in order to limit the numbers of contacts for our students. We may need to cap enrollment in some classrooms in order to do this. If you would like to ensure a place here at UJA for your child, I encourage you to complete your enrollment process as soon as possible.

Please continue to pray for us. We need wisdom. More than anything, we want to love your children in person, to teach them about the world around them and about a God who loves them very much. We want to be, in the best way we can, living examples of the joy that comes from being a child of God. We can't wait to see, in person, our students again this Fall! Thank you so much for your support and patience as we work through this.

God bless,
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