



SIERRA SANDS Unified School District

District Communication Aug. 17

August 17, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As we settle into a routine in our second week of school, I want to thank everyone for being a part of something so much bigger than any one of us individually. Here are some bits of information you might find encouraging:

- Sierra Sands opened schools with nearly 5,200 students. This represents almost 200 more students enrolled in our ten schools than last year.
- 98% of our students are attending in person instruction.
- We are carefully managing COVID-19 by following all state-mandates. We have had a few positive cases among staff and students, and immediately followed protocols. Appropriate quarantining and testing is deployed and, to date, no classrooms or schools have needed to quarantine - only certain individuals. Again, we follow all guidance and protocols in order to best protect the safety for all.
- We are a dedicated staff, proud to serve our community, working very hard in our transition back from Distance Learning to a full, in-person instructional program. We are a team of almost 600 employees who teach, coach, support, nourish, and encourage students to reach their full potential and realize their dreams.

CDPH Order for Staff

Last week, on August 11, California became the first state to require a COVID-19 vaccination or regular testing for public and private school staff when a new California Department of Public Health (CDPH) order was issued. The order took effect on August 12 and schools must be fully compliant by October 15. Our staff is taking this window of time to fully understand the requirements of the order, and determine how to properly implement this new state-issued requirement.

I want to acknowledge right up front that I am aware there are those who passionately embrace this order, those who passionately oppose the order, and many who are everywhere between. In Sierra Sands, we always keep our eye on what's best for students, while adhering to the law in the most practical, efficient, and professional manner. From a philosophical perspective, at all times, we strive to serve students in the least restrictive environment possible.

Back to School Night

This week we kick off our tradition of inviting families into the schools to connect parents and teachers. Students thrive when they experience a positive and trusting partnership with the classroom and the home. Here is a list of dates for Back to School Night at each school site (all sites start at 6pm):

Faller/Richmond Tues., Aug. 17
Las Flores/Inyokern Wed., Aug. 18
Gateway/Pierce Mon., Aug. 23
Monroe/Murray Tues., Aug. 24
Mesquite H.S. Wed., Aug. 25
Burroughs H.S. Thur., Aug. 26

Totally Worth It

As I walk through campuses, the enthusiasm that students share about being in school, learning with their peers, and re engaging in all the clubs, sports, and activities, makes all of the challenges we face - totally worth it.

Sincerely,
Dave Ostash
Superintendent