



August 1, 2020

Dear Ripon Unified Parents, Staff, and Community:

First of all, I have truly missed the students and staff being together in person. I hope that you have been able to cherish some time and memories with your family and that your family is healthy and safe, during these ever changing and challenging times. Since March 16th, the Ripon Unified Community has stood strongly together to combat the COVID-19 pandemic by staying home as a result of the State's shelter in place order. From March through May our staff, students, and community persevered during the most difficult period, completing the school year in the most unimagined ways.

Since our school classrooms closed on March 13, 2020, the Ripon Unified School District staff supported our students through the following: nutrition services' staff provided breakfast/lunch, teachers adapted curriculum and their lessons to deliver distance learning, professional development opportunities were created, and our maintenance staff worked to thoroughly sanitize and complete improvements at our school campuses. We are most appreciative to all of our Ripon Unified Staff who have worked diligently to keep us moving forward.

Opening a new school year under normal circumstances requires a great deal of planning and preparation. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought us numerous unforeseen challenges. It is our strong desire to bring students back to school for in-person instruction, but we must do so in a safe manner. We understand that this pandemic has affected our families and students in a variety of ways. When the 2020-21 school year begins on August 12th, it will be in a distance learning format for all students, based upon the order of our Governor and local Public Health Department. We will continue to work towards transitioning to in-person instruction, but will base decisions upon guidance from Public Health Officials to support a safe transition back to learning on site in classrooms. Our District has created staff and student procedures that align with safety protocols set forth by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Please keep in mind these guidelines and protocols from the state and local agencies may change frequently based upon the status of each local community. When students return to campus for in-person instruction, we anticipate learning will look different than previous years due to new health and safety measures.

Even though the 2020-21 school year will begin with distance learning, the three learning models RUSD could possibly offer throughout the school year include Distance Learning, Hybrid/Blended Learning, and/or full In-Person Instruction. At any point in the school year we need to be prepared to transition from one model to another.

What is different now in relation to the emergency distance learning of the spring is that instruction must comply with Assembly Bill 77. This bill outlines the requirements for a distance learning model. Instruction is aligned to grade level standards and to be provided at a level of quality and challenge substantially equivalent to regular in person instruction, in addition, attendance and grading are also required. The bill also includes a requirement for minimum instructional minutes, as well as weekly engagement recordkeeping for each pupil.

We recognize that the start of this school year is far from normal for our Ripon families and staff. Be assured our ultimate goal continues to be providing educational opportunities in person at our school classroom campuses. Until then, the online distance learning schedule school day times will follow our typical in-classroom daily schedules. Our team is ever committed to providing learning that has elements of rigor, relevance, and relationship to prepare our students to become future contributing citizens.

Once again, we are most grateful for your patience, understanding, and support as we work together for our children. Please expect more communication shortly from principals and teachers, as available. Please reach out if you have questions-or need assistance, as school staff are available to help. Take good care.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ziggy Robeson
Superintendent