



# Columbia Union School District

*"Home of the 49ers"*

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**GOVERNING BOARD**

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*Dr. Jeff Wittman*  
*Mary Rose Rutikanga*

**Website**

*www.cusd49.com*

August 3, 2020

Dear Parents and Community Members,

It is with absolute frustration and an extremely heavy heart that the Columbia Union School District Board of Trustees must inform you that we are being forced to start the 2020-2021 school year with students participating in full time distance learning. We do not feel that this is what is best for kids or families and stand firmly in agreement with The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control that schools should reopen. Health decisions should be made locally, not in Sacramento which is currently what is happening.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html>  
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Return-to-School-During-COVID-19.as>

We have no choice in this matter, however, if you agree with our position you are welcome to contact the California Department of Public Health ([https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/contact\\_us.aspx](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/contact_us.aspx)) or the Governor's Office (<https://govapps.gov.ca.gov/gov40mail/>).

Currently, we would ask that you plan for the first few 1-2 months to have your students participate in distance learning. We are closely monitoring the situation with weekly meetings with public health officials and the other district superintendents. If it is possible to return to campus sooner, we will make every effort to do so!

Please see the attached letter for more information from Tuolumne County Public Health and Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools. Tuolumne County will be placed on the state monitoring list for COVID-19. According to guidelines from the California Department of Public Health and the California Department of Education, a county must be off of the county monitoring list for 14 consecutive days for in person instruction to begin.

Our staff have been working diligently throughout the summer to ensure our students receive the best possible education given the current

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circumstances. Our teachers will be providing daily live lessons for students via the computer. In addition to the live instruction on the computer, teachers will provide additional individual practice for your student. Student attendance will be linked to their daily participation in distance learning. Student grades will be dependent on participation and quality of work completion. We have a suite of technology tools that will make learning engaging and impactful.

We have created a survey to gather information about your family's needs during this time. Please complete the survey by August 7. The survey can be found at <https://forms.gle/TS7YEbFoLGLw5o116> and on our website. The survey asks if your student needs a Chromebook, a wireless hotspot to access the internet, and/or lunch delivery.

We have created a draft reopening plan for the coming year. We are currently waiting for approval from Tuolumne County Public Health. Once we have received this approval, we will share the plan with you and post it on our website. We are still planning to offer independent study and homeschool programs in addition to distance learning.

We will be reaching out with more information as our plans are solidified. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact our administration, Joe Aldridge at [jaldridge@cusd49.com](mailto:jaldridge@cusd49.com) or Suzanne Mohr at [smohr@cusd49.com](mailto:smohr@cusd49.com).

Sincerely,

Columbia Elementary Board of Trustees