

## 05.13.20 EMAIL TO ALL STAFF

Colleagues,

Each week as I write my comments for the update, prior to sending I read it countless times as I want to make sure that the tone and intent are what I desire it to be. This past weekend, I reviewed the last two district updates and found them depressing regarding the financial situation that TUSD is facing. After re-reading them, I came to the conclusion that it is better and more honorable to share the facts as they exist, rather than to down play a serious situation. As I have shared before in a prior update, I want each of you to have the facts as I know them to be, as we are all in this together. With that said, the following financial information is even darker than I have expressed previously.

District Budget Update: In last Wednesday's update, I provided you the district's best estimate on the amount (\$5.7 million) that needed to be cut from our budget. Based on conversations with a variety of people including the County Office of Education, Dr. Goodall, Dr. Pecot and myself felt that the information that was shared was the most up-to-date that we had at the moment. I have mentioned previously that the information the district is receiving changes quickly and constantly. On Thursday morning, I woke up to the news that Governor Newsom had announced that state revenues are estimated to be \$54 billion short. This shortfall translates into a K-12 reduction of \$18.4 billion. School districts are being advised to plan on a 10% reduction in state funding or about \$15 million for TUSD. I thought finding \$5.7 million in reductions after reducing our budget by \$11.7 million over the last four years would be extremely challenging and unpleasant. The thought of finding \$15 million in reductions is very disturbing and upsetting to me. Honestly, for the first time in the last two months, I could not fall asleep that Thursday night.

I believe that a reduction of \$15 million will change TUSD as we know it. Reductions will be needed in areas that have never been considered previously. Two areas that will now be considered for reductions if Governor Newsom's figures are correct, is the elimination of all home-to-school transportation and the elimination of all sports in our district. These two items could save the district approximately \$2 million. I do not expect these two items to be the first cuts made but if the reduction to schools is as bad as we are now hearing from the Governor, they will certainly be considered at some point soon. That I would even mention the possibility of these two reductions should be evidence to you of the severity of the situation we are facing. Every position will be reviewed to determine if it is necessary or not. Certainly, the level of services provided to students and parents will be reduced. No part of the district's operations will be exempt from feeling the impact of the reductions. Based on these coming reductions, the public will have to adjust to a school system that is both underfunded and understaffed. Phone calls will not be returned as quickly, emails will go unanswered for longer periods of time and the lawns mowed less frequently. Since the passing of Prop 13 in the late seventies, schools in California have been under attack. Where at one time our schools were in the top five for per pupil funding, we are now 43rd and soon to fall lower. Educators are constantly asked to do more with less. At some point there is nothing more to give.

When will cuts begin to be announced or voted upon by our school board? No decisions will be made until after the release of the May Revise because we want to act on the best available information. Unfortunately, because of the extension of the due date for taxes from April 15 to July 15, I believe the

information from the May Revise will be dire but also with little detail and perhaps suggestions for next steps. The district will still have to produce an adopted budget by the end of June as this requirement has not been waived. I expect that there will be substantial reductions by the time of the budget adoption. It is likely that a state budget will not be adopted until September which could then have more reductions in it than previously thought. If that happens, I would expect Governor Newsom and the state legislature to give school districts increased flexibility to make certificated reductions. Because the March 15 deadline for notifying teachers that their position is being eliminated has passed, districts cannot make cuts to its certificated staff until allowed by Sacramento. During the Great Recession, such flexibility was allowed and with the depth of this decline even greater than then, I am assuming that such flexibility will once again be granted.

By next week's update, I should have a good understanding of what is in the May Revise and will be able to share it with you. I know that this is a terribly stressful time and I apologize for having to share disturbing news with you. If you have a question or a concern, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. My email is [bstephens@tUSD.net](mailto:bstephens@tUSD.net). My personal cell number is 209.262.0098. While this information seems daunting and truthfully more than a bit scary, at some point we will get through it to a brighter day.

Note: Just received a communique from the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) that predicted a slightly smaller deficit than did Governor Newsom. This was better news but the communique was short on specifics for school districts. Districts are being hit with a tremendous amount of information right now. I am encouraged by the communique from the LAO, however the need for budget reductions is still present, so it seems like the question will be about the size of the reduction that we will be facing. I have respect for the work of the LAO but the difference between their figures and that of Governor Newsom is reflective of the difficulty in getting to the bottom of this mess. I am sure that there will be much more to follow. Below is a link to the LAO report. The report explains the reasoning for the difference in their budget projections and that of the Governor Newsom.

<https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2020/4228/spring-outlook-2020.pdf>

End-of-Year Activities (Petty): Attached is information regarding end-of-year activities at our high schools and for 8th grade students. If you can come out and support these activities that would be much appreciated.

Reopening School Task Force (Stocking): The Task Force for reopening TUSD schools continues to meet weekly and has had the opportunity to collect initial feedback from TEA reps, principals and plans to meet with CSEA representatives in the upcoming week. The Task Force's plans include safety measures provided by the state and Educational Program Guidelines to support the level of community transmission upon return to school, with our existing resources. TUSD is currently preparing for 3 scenarios communicated by the state:

1. All Students return to school daily, beginning August 11th with COVID-19 safety measure guidelines based on the level of community transmission at that time.
2. All students return to school on an alternate A/B schedule to allow for social distancing, beginning August 11th with COVID-19 safety measure guidelines based on the level of community transmission at that time, with Blended Learning Educational Guidelines.

3. All students start the year with Distance Learning Educational Guidelines due to continued school closures, beginning on August 11th with COVID-19 safety measure guidelines based on the level of community transmission at that time.

Closing Out the 2019-2020 School Year (Harrison): With less than 2 weeks remaining in the 2019-2020 school year and the final day of school on Friday, May, 22, 2020, the district will soon be providing guidelines to site principals to share with their staff regarding the gathering and collection of student's and teacher's belongings in classrooms, and procedures for end of year check out for staff on their school campuses. The Student Services Department has been collaborating with a number of departments in the district in order to develop this plan and timeline. We realize everyone is anxious to get these tasks completed at their sites. However, there are a number of factors to consider and plan for in order for everyone's health and safety during this unprecedented time.

End-of-School Year District Collection of Instructional Materials (Harrison): As a reminder, beginning the week of April 27, 2020, Library Technicians and Teacher-Librarians began the process of collecting instructional materials for the 2019-2020 school year. This process has been ongoing at school sites since that time. Every school site has its own plan for the return of instructional materials, messaged to its own school community. Staff should email their site administration and/or library staff if they need specific site-based information. Staff should email staff in the Instructional Media Center if they need more general information regarding access to the Instructional Media Center. The Instructional Media Center is open to receive instructional materials after Friday, May 22, 2020 and take fine payments in the mornings each weekday beginning the week of May 11, 2020, and continuing through the summer. Advanced Placement materials will be checked out after Friday, May, 22, 2020 and those schedules, different for each school site, have been messaged by school sites. The return of instructional materials has been a complex process and a very large undertaking. The district is very thankful and appreciative of all the committed and dedicated staff who have worked to realize the collection of instructional materials during this very difficult time.

Week 4 of the District Distance Learning Education Plan Implementation (Harrison): Beginning Monday, May 11, 2020 the District began our fourth week of implementing the Distance Learning Education Plan. Teachers continue to provide distance learning to their students and administrators continue to provide support to both students, and staff as well as problem solve and plan for a number of concerns. Tuesday, May 12, 2020, was an optional day for grade PK-12 teachers to pick-up student work for weeks 1 and 2 for grading, that was collected last Friday, May 8, 2020. On Friday, May 15, 2020, weeks 3 and 4 student work will be collected at all school sites. PK-12 teachers are scheduled to pick-up weeks 3 and 4 and/or weeks 1 and 2 student work for grading on Tuesday, May 19, 2020. Again, we all recognize this is a tremendous undertaking to organize as well as being complex as all schools continue to implement the Distance Learning Educational Plan. Again, the District continues to be very thankful and appreciative of all staff's commitment, dedication, and support as we provide our students with their education during this unprecedented time.

Professional Learning and Curriculum Update (Harrison): The Professional Learning and Curriculum Department has wrapped up professional development sessions for the 2019-2020 school year. We encourage you to check out the resources available on the Distance Learning Portal page, including Distance Learning Technology Tips and Tools and recordings of professional development sessions on:

- Starting to use Microsoft Teams

- Creating a SharePoint website
- Creating fillable PDF documents
- Using Microsoft Forms to create quizzes and surveys
- Using Flipgrid to enable students to record videos

Shortly, the Professional Learning and Curriculum Team will be sending a survey link for teachers to provide feedback and ideas on how we can improve our professional learning offerings to best align to your needs. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey.

Finally, as we face difficult times it is easy to get overwhelmed as the next steps in this journey seem so daunting and challenging. The video below is about joy. It is about appreciating the company of loved ones and relishing shared experiences. In the video, a father and daughter (not professionals) sing a song from the Phantom of the Opera, my favorite musical. You can tell that they are finding joy in singing together. The father's pride in his daughter's singing is palpable. Despite all that is wrong in our world at this time, I hope that each one of us can appreciate the joy of beautiful voices enjoying each other's company.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uahlf4fo3iQ>

Brian Stephens, Ed.D.