

President's Update

I want to report to you about my Wednesday's meeting with the District. As always, Jake and I addressed the pressing issues our members ask. Here's what we asked and what was answered:

- 1. Can we change the secondary blended schedule?* The middle school sites, especially, asked whether we could change MUSD's schedules to resemble CVUSD's and/or SVUSD.

The District's response: according to Dr. Levin at County Health, students are allowed 1 cohort a day. CVUSD and SVUSD will most likely have to change their respective secondary schedules. In addition, two cohorts a day will allow the District more time to provide thorough cleaning.

MEA's Retort: let's make the schedule clear to teachers and families, and make absolutely explicit what the expectations for instruction are for blended learning.
- 2. What happens if a kid gets COVID in our class? What are the reporting procedures?*

The District's response: as late as last week, there was a difference in the County's mind between elementary and secondary in terms of open and close contact and in terms of contact tracing. The County has now determined that TK-12 may open on October 21. This means that if one kid gets sick, then that kid and those who had close contact with him/her will go into quarantine. The class will continue to meet and there will be no reporting to the class or to teachers.

MEA's Retort: MEA asked that the District communicate as much as possible to all stakeholders. The District is now asking its legal team and the County how much and to whom they can report information. In addition, MEA showed MUSD how Irvine USD reports COVID cases. MUSD was open to the possibility of using something like Irvine's list. Finally, MUSD agreed to provide subs and test teachers at District expense for any teacher who has a child who tests positive for COVID in his/her classroom.
- 3. How come we are synchronous learning? During the summer, the District said this would not happen.*

The District's Response: They do not want synchronous learning but this remedy is better than the alternatives. The alternatives are more combos and more students moving out of the District because the District did not accommodate parent requests. As of late last week, 54 parents moved their kids from blended to DL. MUSD has lost about 500 kids to private schools and parents moving from our community.

MEA's Retort: if it can be decided at the site and by individual teachers and grade levels whether or not a teacher teaches synchronously, let's make this happen. MEA also wants as many teachers to keep their jobs this year and beyond. Teaching kids on campus and at-home is not a solution; it is a remedy that is better than any other if we are ordered back on campus. We also advocated for more appropriate/necessary technology so teachers can do their jobs during blended classes.
- 4. Will teachers have to use their duty-free lunch and prep time to monitor class movement?* Especially at elementary, teachers will need to escort (from a distance), their kids off

campus in orderly fashion. This also bleeds into ingress/egress issues as well as site time. **The District's Response:** there will be no change in instructional minutes because they are mandated by the State (AB 98). Each site has a protocol as per the MUSD Safety Plan about how to get teachers and students off campus. **MEA's Retort:** we have negotiated a change in site time. In addition, the expressed reasons for the hours between cohorts was to allow teachers to prepare for the next class and to allow time for thorough cleaning between cohorts. By law, we have a duty-free lunch, and we negotiated a 20-minute preparation period. Please let me know if there is any clear abridgement of your time between classes or if there is any expectation that your arrival or departure is unreasonably beyond site time.

5. *Do elementary and middle school teachers have to take individual student temperatures?*

District Response: no. High school teachers will. **MEA Retort:** we asked is there any other way to conduct temperature checks at MHS. The answer was that with 800 kids on campus, there really is no other way. MEA accepted this response for now.

6. *Can there be a teacher prep day prior to the student and teacher return to campus?*

District Response: we have 180 instructional days demanded by law. If we have a prep day, we'd have to borrow from our February and/or May District holidays. The SB would have to approve this after MEA membership approved. The next SB meeting is Tuesday, the 20th. MEA would have to get an answer to the District by this (Thursday afternoon). **MEA Retort:** there is no way we can get a consensus by then and our members may have made plans based on the calendar that we negotiated 2-3 years ago.

MEA does not necessarily agree with the District's sweeping interpretation of Constitutional Law, nor does it believe that any of the teachers' comments deliberately intended to misinform or undermine the decisions or actions of our employers or our trustees.

With this understood, my orientation is toward protecting you, your job, and your family. I am not telling members how to act, what to think, or how to communicate their individual consciences; rather, this is just a quick reminder that MUSD employees are prohibited from representing the views of the District in public forums unless expressly authorized to do so. Teachers can post his/her own views, but we cannot, as State and District employees, state that our views are that of the District's or that we are representing other District employees. For your own protection, do not post on non-job-related sites during your class time, during work hours, or on your work computer. Please be careful what you post on social media during your own time.

Is it a surprise that teachers would have apprehensions and concerns considering that over 80% of MEA members were against reopening schools via a waiver? I once again call on our trustees to use their positions as the educational leaders in our community to develop common understandings. The shame is that a tribal and toxic dynamic was entirely preventable. Consider that during this whole month, all concerned stakeholders, together,

could be planning safe and effective paths back to our schools regardless of our date of return.

A few more quick additions:

- The District purchased plexiglass shields for all teachers.
- The District purchased charging stations for computers for classrooms
- Bargaining Chair, Lisa McCarter, expects to receive thumbs up or thumbs down on bringing MUSD/MEA Working Conditions MOU to Executive Board for its approval by Friday afternoon

Last but not least, things change every day. My guess is that I will have to rewrite at least part of this tomorrow. I will certainly address members' concerns about the District's reopening plan and will get answers to you ASAP.

Stay safe and sane!

Brian