

LVEA TODAY



Reopening & Bargaining Update

We hope that you and your family are safe and are having a relaxing summer. We know this has been a crazy, uncertain and stressful summer. As of last week, it looked like we were going to cautiously return to our classrooms with a revised schedule while following social distancing guidelines. Students/parents were given the option to switch to a new Virtual Learning Academy or return to an in-person classroom environment. For the in-person option, the District released an AM/PM plan which would have split classes into morning and afternoon sessions to keep person-to-person contacts to a minimum.

While COVID cases were increasing at that point, the elevated infection rate has since become unacceptably high. LVEA has received hundreds of concerned emails and text messages about the danger of returning with so many safety concerns. Your Bargaining Team has spent three full days this week negotiating with the District, and if you listened to Dan Stepenosky's webinar on Wednesday, you've heard that the latest plans are changing to ensure safety for employees and students. To be clear, **LVUSD will start both models with distance learning.**

Here's what we know as of now – there will be two options for students:

1. **Virtual Academy:** Students/parents have until July 24 to sign up for classes in the Virtual Academy and the Personnel office will send out an email invitation for teachers to apply for these positions later this week. These students will form complete virtual classes and will therefore be taken out of the numbers when creating classes and master schedules for school sites even with in-person learning starting digitally.
2. **In-Person Learning:** Students/parents who prefer a classroom face-to-face model of learning can opt for this by July 24; **however, these classes will start out in a distance learning mode**, similar to this past spring. These classes will return to a face-to-face, in-person model once it is safe to return to the classroom.

When will In-Person teachers return to the classroom from initial distance learning with their students?

Once the District deems it safe for students and employees to return. While

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some districts are throwing out specific return dates that could be subject to change, LVUSD is leaving a return date open. LVEA suggests that you plan to work in this initial distance learning mode for as little as several weeks up to several months, maybe longer. This is not the ideal learning environment for students but safety must be ensured for our workforce and students. LVEA will continue advocating for open communication and clarity to ensure that you will be able to plan your classes accordingly.

How will teachers be selected for the Virtual Academy?

This week, the LVEA and LVUSD Bargaining Teams finalized a Virtual Academy Transfer Language agreement (attached to this email) that outlines the steps of selecting teachers for this academy, starting with a request for volunteers for this new program. The language was borrowed from the transfer article of our existing labor contract and adds that employees will have the right to return to their home site at the conclusion of their assignment in the Virtual Academy. It also states that employees can state that they have a "COVID issue" (that could include a family member) that would make teaching in the Virtual Academy preferable to the employee. This could enhance an employee's case for moving to the Virtual Academy. LVEA does not want employees to be any more specific (than stating they have a COVID issue) since this could lead to divulging personal, private medical issues to the district. Going into further detail about your medical history or personal health will not help you obtain a position in the virtual academy, and we fear what the district may do with this information when it is time to go back to the classroom or if there are not enough spots in the Virtual Academy.

Can students switch between the two options?

Yes, but only at the semester break for secondary grade levels and end of trimester for elementary grade levels.

What schedule will distance learning follow?

Your Bargaining Team is working with the district to find the best possible solution for teachers and students. Our team is encouraging the district to look at a block schedule for all secondary schools to minimize the number of zoom sessions that students and teachers would have to do each day and allow for depth of instruction.

Once the In-Person option shifts back to the classroom from distance learning, why was an AM/PM model chosen?

The AM/PM model was chosen by the District to limit person-to-person contacts and so that students would see their teachers every day. LVEA recommended against this AM/PM model as we felt it was difficult for childcare and other reasons.

Is the District ensuring that classrooms will be safe once students return?

The District is following county and state health guidelines to enhance safety by purchasing masks, plexiglass barriers, safety shields, thermometers, and other PPE. The district is using county and state infection data to decide when it safe to return to campus. LVEA will work hard to make sure your return is as safe as possible.

How many minutes will be spent teaching in the virtual learning environments?

The state (via Senate Bill SB98) has established minimum minutes per day and the bargaining teams will work over the next few weeks to establish how that should look for both the Virtual Academy and the temporary distance learning portion on in-person instruction.

Will there be a more specific set of expectations for employees in terms of student interactions, minutes of instruction, virtual platforms, attendance, etc.?

Yes. Last spring employees (because of COVID) had no real notice and very little time to prepare for distance learning. This fall will be different. The District plans to establish clear guidelines on what will be expected as well as adequate professional development to support us.

Will there be an early retirement incentive anytime soon?

Last summer, part of our contract agreement was to spend this past school year looking into the feasibility of an early retirement plan for 2020-21. We discussed this option this week and are looking at a possible plan for June 2021. A subgroup of the bargaining teams has been created to discuss this further. We hope to share good news soon.

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