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November 9, 2020

Dear KSD Community,

We sincerely appreciate your patience over the last several months as we have been navigating school instruction during an extremely volatile and uncertain time. Our board would especially like to extend our gratitude to KSD teachers and staff for adapting to new methods of teaching, and all of the additional work and new learning this has required.

In the spirit of full transparency, we feel it is important to let you know our position on the recent meetings between the Kentfield School District (KSD) and the Kentfield Teachers Association (KTA), and next steps related to a transition to in-person teaching.

Transition to Hybrid Instruction - Thursday, November 12th

As KSD Trustees, we feel it is our obligation to our students, and our fiduciary duty to the Kentfield and Greenbrae community who elected us, to get kids back in classrooms safely as soon as possible.

Last Friday, November 6th, a negotiation team of KSD administrators, board members, and KTA leaders met to review and approve the final safety preparations for a transition to Hybrid Instruction on our mutually agreed upon date of this Thursday, November 12th.

During this session, KSD negotiators vigorously attempted to persuade KTA leaders to increase cohort size from 8 to 12 for the Hybrid Instruction launch on Thursday. KSD negotiators based their argument on three factors:

1. The surge of interest to participate in Hybrid Instruction indicated by last week's parent survey results
2. Updated Marin Public Health guidelines due to Marin's Tier 3 COVID status. Section 3.03 of the MOU specifically states that "the parties agree to meet as soon as possible to negotiate the impact and effects of any revisions or updates to the (Public Health) guidelines" from July 1, 2020.
3. Our commitment to uphold the California Education Code, which was recently amended by Senate Bill 98 and Assembly Bill 77 to entitle every student to in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible.

We feel disappointed that the KTA negotiators were not receptive to the proposal from the KSD to increase the cohort size from 8 to 12. However, we are appreciative that the KSD and KTA negotiators did jointly agree that every student who desires to return for Hybrid Instruction now (and in the future), will be assigned a cohort.

For more detailed information about cohort assignments and the schedule for the next three weeks of instruction for families who have chosen Hybrid Instruction or Distance Learning, please refer to the emails sent by [Bacich](#) and [Kent](#) Principals on Saturday, November 7th.

Next steps in KSD - KTA negotiations

During the August 18th School Board Meeting ([link to video recording](#)), our KSD Board raised serious concerns about the instructional program and school schedules, as envisioned in the [“Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and school opening during the 2020-21 school year.”](#)

During that board meeting, KTA negotiators assured us that they would be open to revisiting the terms of the MOU after the start of school based on the significant concerns brought forth by board members during the meeting. The MOU was approved by a majority of the KSD Board solely because of that assurance.

From a board perspective, we are frustrated that KTA negotiators have been unwilling to revisit the areas of identified concern including, but not limited to, the instructional program and schedule in the MOU despite repeated attempts by KSD administrators to do so. As a result, we have directed Superintendent Raquel Rose to formally request to bargain with KTA leaders in renegotiating components of the MOU using the following criteria:

1. Best practices from the 55 Marin schools already offering in-person instruction
2. Local data on school safety from [Marin County Public Health](#)
3. Feedback over the last several months from students, parents, and teachers

Further, we have directed Superintendent Rose to promptly secure the services of an outside mediator should KSD and KTA be unable to negotiate the necessary changes to the parties' MOU within the coming weeks.

Finally, we have directed Superintendent Rose to ensure the necessary preparations are in place for two critical milestones:

- Early December: Transition to cohort sizes of 12
- Early January, 2021: Transition to full in-person instruction and a new student schedule

COVID-19 scientific data

Please know that we fully acknowledge that the pandemic has made us all feel increased stress, anxiety, and uncertainty about our own lives and those of our loved ones. We deeply empathize with those members of our community who are facing extremely challenging circumstances right now.

As board members, we are also acutely aware of the following:

- According to the [Marin County Public Health School Dashboard](#), there has not been a single case of suspected in-school transmission of COVID-19 among the approximately 40,000 students and 5300 staff members since Marin schools opened on September 9th.
- There are [enormous costs to children](#) not being in school including higher incidence of depression, drug use, anxiety, abuse, and toxic stress.
- The effects of the pandemic are not felt equally across all students. [A June report from McKinsey and Company](#) found that the average learning loss for students is seven months if in-school instruction does not resume until January, 2021, and for low-income students, it is more than a year. According to the report, “We estimate that this would exacerbate existing achievement gaps by 15% to 20%.”

In closing, we invite you to attend our monthly school board meeting tomorrow at 5 PM to learn more from staff about our hybrid instruction transition this week and other timely District topics. The meeting agenda is [here](#) and zoom info to log in is below. Our school board meetings are also recorded and stored in a [video archive](#) if you cannot attend live in person.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact our Superintendent Raquel Rose at rose@kentfieldschools.org and our Board President, Heather McPhail Sridharan at hmcphailsridharan@kentfieldschools.org. As always, feedback is welcome and valued.

In gratitude,

Davina Goldwasser
Sarah Killingsworth
Heather McPhail Sridharan
David Riedel
Quoc Tran

[Kentfield School District Board of Trustees](#)

ZOOM WEBINAR

LINK: <https://kentfieldschools.zoom.us/j/83148726597?pwd=cmdkL0JvSIMzRmJ6N0NYWmg5ZWY5UT09>

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