



OUR VIRTUAL CONVERSATION

May 21, 2020

Thank you to everyone who attended the Virtual Conversation this morning. I enjoyed having the opportunity to interact and update you on our plans, to read your comments and to answer your questions as best I could. Although I wish we could meet in person, I am glad we could at least connect virtually. For those of you who were unable to attend, [a recording of the Virtual Conversation](#) is posted under Chancellor's Messages on the District Intranet, and I have attached the PowerPoint for those who requested it.

First and foremost, I want to reiterate what I said today. Although our budget outlook is concerning, I am committed to do everything in my power to prevent layoffs of our contract employees. Our employees are our district's most valuable resource.

PREPARING FOR A RETURN TO THE CAMPUSES

In our conversation, I talked about our preparation and plans for reopening the campuses. Our planning is built upon four key planning principles: safety of our employees and students; ensuring financial and academic support for our students; continued commitment to equity and student success; and maintaining our core enrollment. Although we are starting to see signs that more businesses and public spaces are opening more rapidly, we still have many unanswered questions about when and how we can safely open our campuses.

A fundamental element in our planning is strictly adhering to the state and local public health orders and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control. We are taking steps now to prepare to reopen the campuses including developing plans for cleaning and sanitizing the facilities, purchasing Personal Protective Equipment, and installing signage and physical barriers to promote physical distancing. The preparation process is tentatively planned to begin in early June and is expected to take about a month to complete.

Once the stay at home order is lifted for higher education in San Diego County and the work to prepare our campuses to open has been completed, we will begin returning employees to the campuses in phases. Our college and district leadership are working on identifying the plan for when and how our employees will return. Although we do not yet have any firm dates, our goal right now is to have all employees back to campus at some level by the end of summer/beginning of fall.

Our return is also contingent upon having various policies and guidelines in place to address the many situations that affect our employees, including employees who are considered to be high-risk for COVID-19, employees who need to work remotely because of childcare or other responsibilities, employees who are exposed to COVID-19, and countless other scenarios. We also recognize our workplace is not going to be the same as it was when we left in March. We will continue to hold meetings on Zoom even when we return to campus, we will likely be wearing masks when working near others, we will be conducting some business remotely from our desks, and the potluck lunches and food-centered celebrations will be on hold for a while.

I want to thank all the members of the Rapid Response teams who have made thoughtful recommendations and developed action plans to prepare for our return. The next step is the prioritization and ongoing implementation of these recommendations.

DISTRICT'S FISCAL OUTLOOK

We also discussed the district's fiscal outlook. While I outlined Governor Newsom's May Revised budget in my [May 15 message](#), today we took a more in-depth look our District's budget. Because of the impact of coronavirus on the state's economy, our core funding from the state through the Student-Centered Funding Formula is being cut by 10%, or \$9.3 million. The Strong Workforce program is being cut by 55% (\$6.1 million at GCCCD), and the Student Equity and Achievement program is being cut by 15% (\$1.1 million at GCCCD).

Our projections for the 2020-2021 budget show that 96% of our expenses are for salaries and benefits, while 12% are for other operational expenses. With this significant of a gap, difficult reductions throughout the district must be made. We are looking at a number of cost savings measures and every idea is being carefully considered, including the possibility of an early retirement incentive. However, this will need to be negotiated in accordance with our employee contracts.

Despite the challenges ahead of us, I want to say again how proud I am to be a part of this District. I hope that we can look at these unprecedented circumstances as an opportunity to rethink how we do business and find innovative new ways to best serve our students.

I will keep you informed on developments to address our budget challenges and our plans to return to the campuses. I hope to "see" you again soon!

Lynn

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