

Dear Families

Recently, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) introduced a tiered framework that uses a color-coded ranking to decide the level of services that a County can provide. A County in Tier 1 (Purple) is not allowed to reopen for in-person instruction unless there is an approved waiver from the local health department. The CDPH guides schools for reopening for in-person instruction along with any directives or executive orders issued by California's Governor.

The COVID numbers in Kings County are trending downward, which is another critical step toward the possibility of a healthy return of our students to campus. The County standing is based entirely on testing data.

The essential data points with the monitoring are:

1. The number of cases per 100,000 people
2. The positivity rate of testing
3. Health Matrix Index

The County needs to be at 7 or below on the adjusted case rate to meet one metric for the next (red) tier, and the week ending September 19, 2020, we are at a 7.2 case rate. Additionally, Kings County must be at 8% or below on our testing positivity, and as of September 19 data, we are at 4.1%.

When our County numbers move into the Red tier for two weeks, the School Districts in the County will be able to begin introducing in-person on-site instruction.

The downward trend of the County's COVID cases brings exciting news. It would mean lifting some restrictions and a broader reopening of local schools without the need for a waiver.

Where is Central Union?

The Board of Trustees has regularly expressed the need for parental options during this current situation. The Board desires flexibility to families for the decision regarding in-person or distance/virtual learning according to their needs. This direction continues to be the path of the staff of the District. Our focus remains on taking the precautionary steps to plan for the future regarding the in-person return. We want to provide our community with the options and choices to meet your needs.

What is Central Union doing?

While we began the year with full virtual/distance learning, the District continues to follow the guidance from the State for the move toward offering in-person instruction options to families.

1) Small Cohorts – During the second week of September, the District introduced the return of in-person instruction with specialized support and services for small groups of students under Individualized Learning plans. The District followed the state guidelines for this in-person return. The State allowed this option for a small group of identified students, even though the County currently remains in the Purple Tier.

2) Waiver - In addition to the small cohort model, the District is gathering the necessary documents that must be submitted to our local public health department for the waiver application. We are developing the in-person waiver, which would also provide for in-person instruction even if the County remains in the Purple zone. While the District maintains a timeline for submitting this waiver, with hopes of submission to our local health department by Mid-October, several factors of the waiver can slow the submission process.

3) Red Tier attainment – When the County moves into this zone, Districts can begin the in-person instruction options without the need to file a waiver. When this level is reached, the District will work with the Kings County Public Health Department to plan for in-person instruction.

To help prepare, the District will publish a survey next week about your choice for your child's learning options. A critical part of the District's decisions rests with our families and the educational setting choice for your child(ren).

Family decisions and staff input will guide the waiver process for both in-person instruction or movement into the Red Tier and help how school sites handle our students' return.