

Dear Members,

We know many of you are upset about today's Board of Education announcement which directed change in grading policy.

The proximity of this announcement to the time set by administrators for you to submit your grades means significant added stress and frustration.

Many of you understand the reason for the change, as it is intended to provide a way to both ensure some accountability while also acknowledging the limitations we and our students have confronted this semester. We also know some of you disagree with this policy. However, this is out of our hands.

Your SMMCTA union in consultation with our CTA staff believes the district is violating neither education code, which gives governing boards the prerogative to set regulations for the assessment of students, nor our contract.

Again, we empathize with your frustration at this last-minute notice. We continue our efforts to encourage our district and site leadership to work proactively to set transparent and consistent policies moving forward.

10 MINUTE MEETING

At the December 17th Board of Education meeting, the board voted unanimously to move forward with Distance Learning Plus as the model for the reopening of schools when it is safe. More than 350 people attended and 55 of them spoke.

Thank you to all of the teachers who spoke on behalf of their co-workers and students, and to the parents who took the time to share their viewpoints. I give a special thanks to Brianna Cornejo-Perez, our SAMOHI board member, and Sadie Inatsugu, a SAMO senior, who spoke so eloquently on our behalf and reminded the community of the humanity of teachers, of how successful we are in reaching out to our students both educationally and emotionally, and how teachers are the best resource to use for making this recommendation.

Moving forward, I think sites at all levels will be given latitude on how to utilize and schedule the "plus" part of distance learning. Parents and board members seem to be moving toward twice a week for in-person activities of some kind, however this has not yet been negotiated.

Grading

We know secondary students scoring D's and F's are at a much higher level than would be typical. However, we need students to feel that there is a possibility to pass the class if they do their work so they continue to participate.

Secondary sites are considering a continuation of asynchronous Wednesdays to allow for students to catch up on work and teachers on grading.

Negotiations

The negotiations team and the District met on December 10th to continue discussions on addendums to our MOU related to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We have come to a conceptual agreement on several issues related to the health and safety of our members. Specific language will be provided to members on our website once we have a recommendation for this latest addendum.

- Language regarding medical N95 masks was clarified and strengthened so that members, whose job duties require direct or close personal contact with students, can request one and who can be properly fitted for it, will be provided with them.
- Language to address issues/concerns at sites regarding safety protocols was addressed and who one should contact was clarified when there is a problem.
- Members who contract Covid-19 will be provided with ten days of pandemic sick leave if no provision exists for pandemic related leave under state or federal legislation. *These days will not be taken from the members' leave bank.*
- Phase 3 of the Special Education Addendum was discussed, but at this time teachers and students would not return Winter Break and a start date would not be any earlier than the third week of January. More information to come.
- Regarding CDS, there are preliminary talks to open preschool at Washington West and John Adams. More information to come.
- While the District has submitted TK-2 waivers, nothing has been approved and no discussions took place around this topic. Both parties will meet again on January 7th and 20th.

End of 2020

At last, we have made it to winter break! We hope these two weeks will be a chance to rest and relax, your minds, your bodies, and your eyes. (Fun Zooms only!)

This holiday season will be hard. Many will feel lonely without our typical gatherings of friends and family. We urge you all to resist the temptation to gather in person with people outside of your own family and stay at home unless absolutely necessary as recommended by public health authorities. This holiday season will be crucial to keep our COVID numbers from growing thru the winter and keeping us all healthy until we all have a chance to be vaccinated.

Please be kind to yourselves. You have more than earned it. Rest, relax (only fun zooms are allowed). Try to give your eyes and your souls a rest to refresh and renew.

With greatest respect,
Sarah