

# Lowell Joint SCHOOL DISTRICT

*"Home of Scholars and Champions"*



*Healthy Families and Staff Newsletter* (Update #16)

## Lowell Joint **STRONG**



August 21, 2020

What a crazy and unpredictable time we are all living through! There are times that it feels overwhelming, but it is at these times that we need to stop to take a deep breath, stand in faith, and know that we will exceed in spite of the challenges that come our way = GRIT. I continue to be amazed to witness the immense courage, care, creativity, love of teachers, staff, and our families; we are **LOWELL JOINT STRONG**. Thank you to all of our parents for your grace, mercy, and support. **You are amazing!!**

We absolutely know that this COVID storm is more than challenging for our families and we cannot thank you enough for all that you are doing; TRULY! The past couple of weeks have underscored how much we really do want to be back in class teaching and supporting our students; a screen just does not let us make the heart and educational connection we so desperately want, but we know we will get there. Our Strategic Planning Team continues to plan our next steps toward our return as we follow our **Return to School Adaptable Plan Continuum Plan** and react to the Governor's and LA County Public Health Department (LAPHD) Orders. We want to give the Lowell Joint Family some updates, but please know that these are cliff-note versions of a multifaceted/ever changing world:

- As you are aware, the State placed a large number of counties on the "Watch List", which means that schools would not be allowed to open for in-person instruction until the county is off the Watch List for 14 consecutive days. There are two key measurements, of the five, that our counties must meet to get off the Watch List:

- 1) Positive Testing Percentage: must be below 8% and LA County is currently at 5.7%.
- 2) Case Rate: must be less than 100/100K and LA County is currently 235/100K.

Please remember that a county must meet all of the measurements for 14 days straight, before the county is taken off the State Watch List and then the county needs to remain off the watch list for an additional 14 consecutive days. BUT, the Governor mentioned at a press conference earlier this week that the State might be extending the 14 day window to a 21 day window; once again we keep pivoting every 2-4 days☺.

- You may have also heard a lot about an elementary waiver process. Districts may apply for a waiver to resume in-person instruction as long as all of the other safety guidelines are in place (masks, sanitation, social distancing, etc.); Lowell Joints' safety guidelines are in place and exceed the current County Public Health directives. Neither county will accept any waiver applications until the Case Rate is at least <200/100K. One challenge is that by the time a district/private school completes the very complicated application, the case rate could drop below the 100/100K mark and they would not need the waiver; there are a lot of moving parts that change every 2-4 days☺.
- At this point both LA and Orange County are on the State Watch List, but OC Public Health made a public statement yesterday that OC might be off the Watch List in the near future. LA County does not predict a date to be off the Watch List and you will recall that as our district splits between two counties, we must follow the more restrictive directives.

- Lowell Joint was scheduled to continue distance-learning for all students at least until September 8<sup>th</sup> or until LA County Public Health Department deems it safe to return in a Hybrid model. **LA County Public Health is not able to give us a projected date and even though we certainly hope it is sooner rather than later, we would not anticipate return until at least the first of October.** We would anticipate resuming in a Hybrid model within a week once LA County Public Health deems it safe to return, which allows staff to make sure their classrooms are ready to welcome our students back. The health and safety of our students and staff is our priority and we will follow the directives of LA County Public Health Department as we take each step forward.
- The entire Lowell Joint Family is working so hard, overcoming 100's of challenges, and most importantly lovingly caring for our precious students. You are to be commended; please remember to give each other and yourself a healthy dose of grace and mercy.
- We will continue to update everyone bi-monthly, or sooner if needed, so that we work to keep everyone informed and updated on our "road-map", but please remember that they keep changing our map☺.

My wife and I were out in La Habra just last night when a parent came up to us to tell us what her family thought; she was so kind, thankful, appreciative, and positive ☺. Then her 3<sup>rd</sup> grade daughter came up to share the same thing; that was after her shock that I was in shorts, a t-shirt, and flip-flops☺.

Please allow me to remind all of us that so many things are out of our control these days, yet we know it is our family and the school family that help bring stability. Thank you for taking the time to listen, take walks, and give your children/our students the extra hug and "I love you". Grace and mercy seem to be in short supply these days, but is exactly what our students, our staff, and ourselves need. LJSD is called to speak life into our students, staff, and families; please help us speak life into each other. Your continued strength, compassion, and resilience are an incredible testimony to the shared dedication and commitment of our students, staff, parents, and community; **THANK YOU – WE ARE BLESSED!**

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