



# PALISADES

## CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

### **Executive Director/Principal Report Board of Trustees Meeting January 11, 2021**

*Our mission: PCHS will empower our diverse student population to make positive contributions to the global community by dedicating our resources to ensure educational excellence, civic responsibility, and personal growth.*

#### **School Reopening Updates**

As reported in December, COVID-19 remains at dangerously high levels in LA County. PCHS will continue following the “Safer at Home” order and eLearning will be ongoing until health and safety conditions improve. The LA County Department of Public Health strongly encourages schools to continue virtual instruction for the next three weeks when new directives will be provided and the status of vaccine distribution will be evaluated. Updated guidance related to thresholds for reopening schools and testing recommendations for staff and students is expected. The latest information about vaccines from the LA County Department of Public Health is available [HERE](#).

Other related developments include Governor Gavin Newsom’s release of the [CA Safe Schools for All Plan](#) on December 30. The plan prioritizes the reopening of public schools.

Representatives from California’s largest urban school districts responded to the plan with a [joint letter](#) requesting more support, including the following:

- An immediate, all-hands-on-deck, public health effort to reduce the spread of the virus in low-income communities.
- A clear state standard for COVID-related health issues in schools, with a requirement for in-classroom instruction to begin when the standard is met.
- Public health funds, not K-12 educational funds from Prop. 98, should be used for COVID testing and vaccinations.
- School-based health services should be integrated with COVID testing and vaccination plans.
- Learning-loss recovery plans, including funding for summer school, need to be established now.
- Reopening plans need to include specific funding for special education students.
- A timetable and plan for vaccinations of school staff should be made public by February 1.
- The state should begin to publish detailed information on school and district status in meeting COVID health standards, providing in-person instruction and school-based virus occurrences by February 1.



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These additional resources provide more detailed information about the Safe Schools for All plan:

[CA Department of Public Health's summary of the plan](#)  
[EdSource Quick Guide: "How does Governor Newsom's 'Safe Schools for All' plan work?"](#)

As has been the case throughout the pandemic, changes in state and county directives are anticipated. We will coordinate with our collective bargaining partners to ensure a plan is approved and in place when students and staff are safely able to return to campus on a limited basis. PCHS is committed to providing a safe educational environment and will continue providing eLearning as an option throughout the 2020-21 school year to those families who are more comfortable with that option.

### Schoolwide Goals:

**Schoolwide Goal: PCHS will improve consistency in instructional curriculum, policies, and practices to increase student-centered learning.**

**Schoolwide Goal: PCHS will commit to equitable policies and practices to ensure PCHS's diverse student population has access to academic opportunities.**

- **Friday Schedule** – Administration and faculty are working together to refine the Friday schedule based on feedback provided by students, parents, and teachers. PCHS will follow the ODD/EVEN calendar for the first two weeks of the semester with the first special Friday schedule on January 29.
- **Grading for Equity** - The PCHS schoolwide focus on grading practices and policies during eLearning has brought to light the need for a deeper analysis of our school philosophy and approach to grading. PCHS has initiated a study of effective grading practices including those implemented in similar schools and districts. Following the January 11 faculty presentation addressing equitable grading practices provided by noted educator, researcher and author [Joe Feldman](#), a [Grading for Equity](#) Study Group will convene to develop short and long term recommendations for schoolwide grading.

First semester grade reports support the need to analyze and adjust grading practices. Preliminary data reveals the number of NCs in grade 9 for all departments is a key concern. The achievement gap is most concerning in grade 9<sup>t</sup> showing improvement as students matriculate through higher grades. The impact of learning loss during the pandemic is not a reflection on the professionalism or expertise of PCHS teachers but rather part a systemic need to address evolving educational and societal demands. A detailed grade report will be provided to the Board in February.



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- **Professional Learning Communities (PLC) updates** – One of multiple measures of assessing instruction and student progress at PCHS is through PLC Notebooks submitted to department administrators at the end of each semester. The notebooks provide a snapshot of strategies and tools that are working well and areas where adjustments are recommended. ***Kudos to all PLC Leaders who compile the notebooks and to PLC Coach Lisa Saxon for her detailed feedback reflected below!***

Some PLC highlights of first semester include:

**Algebra 1** - Innovative engagement strategies and projects.

**Algebra 2** - Work with UCLA Curtis Center; shared leadership model; worked together to identify core standards for the purpose of focusing instruction. Eliminated some sub-standards/activities and reduced emphasis on others.

**VAPA** - Virtual Field Trips and YouTube Channel to house student projects.

The group also invested a great deal of time discussing grading policies, with specific focus on dealing with the zeroes.

**World Language** – Varied accommodations in all PLCs to support student success including allowing students to resubmit assignments, teacher intervention, interactive lessons, extended Zoom classes, and checking in regularly with students.

**Schoolwide Goal: PCHS will utilize communication systems currently in place to convey PCHS's strengths, needs, data, and opportunities for participation so that all stakeholders are well-informed and understood.**

PCHS continues to refine communication systems to keep stakeholders well-informed and ensure all voices are heard. During the period of school closure, meeting participation has increased, which could be due to easier access. Plans for regularly scheduled parent information meetings to address requested topics are in progress. In addition, the PCHS Communications Coordinator works with the Mental Health Team and Administrators to provide easily accessible resources for a variety of topics including information about Board of Trustees members, COVID-19 related information, resources to help parents and staff support students who are processing information about equity and diversity, civil unrest, and monumental events.