



Preparing every student to thrive in a global society.

August 6, 2020

Dear Friends of East Side Union High School District,

As I enter my ninth year as Superintendent and my thirtieth year in education, never have we faced the challenges that we are facing this school year. COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the economy, our families, and our educational system. Although we will begin the school year in distance learning, we are fortunate to have tremendously talented and dedicated teachers and staff in our district who are committed to providing the best educational programs to the students of ESUHSD.

We are facing a four-phased approach to fully reopening our schools. Each phase will focus on maintaining the health and safety of our staff, students, and families. Phase one, based on the Governor's mandate, is full distance learning for everyone. Phase two is bringing back our most vulnerable populations for in-person learning, as well as some specialty classes, when Santa Clara County is taken off the State COVID-19 watch list. Phase three will be a hybrid approach: a combination of distance learning with in-person learning. Phase three will require stakeholder input; the creation of a taskforce to identify the conditions for implementation and design of the hybrid learning program together. Phase four is full, in-person instruction. Unfortunately, Phase four may not occur until there is a vaccine that is widely accessible.

We are also facing a fight for social justice that our nation has not seen since the 1960s. We are at an inflection point in our nation's history where the time to tear down the walls of oppression in our public-school system is now. We have laid the groundwork in East Side to take on this enormous challenge. For that, I am forever grateful to our Governing Board and staff. We committed ourselves, as a district, to building capacity amongst all staff members to ensure that equity and inclusion are essential principles of our school system.

Specifically, we set a goal to build capacity to attain equitable ESUHSD communities where:

- ALL students are welcomed as they are
- Strengths and areas of growth for all students are known and supported
- Adults positively respond to the social-emotional, wellness, and academic needs of every student
- All learners engage with tasks that develop the strategic thinking skills for **FULL** participation in their local communities and the global society.

East Side Union High School District Board of Trustees

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During these uncertain times, we will continue our work to build equitable communities and respond to the State's informed decision to include ethnic studies as a graduation requirement. These opportunities will allow us to reflect on graduation requirements, the nature and focus of our academic programs, and the opportunity to revamp our curriculum and build equitable communities where students are welcomed, known, and supported. If done successfully and in a collaborative way, we will continue to knock down the wall of oppression, brick by brick.

In addition, we face economic uncertainty as a school district. We have a structural deficit that is eating away at our stability as an organization and eroding trust that is needed to continue our journey at creating more equitable communities in East Side. I believe the time is right for me to hand over the leadership baton to a new leader. I am committed to finishing out the school year and help guide the district through this pandemic, but I recognize it is time to move on.

This will be my last year serving as superintendent for ESUHSD. I make this announcement now to provide a smooth transition as the Board seeks their new superintendent and I seek new personal opportunities. In addition, I hope this announcement provides the opportunity for all stakeholders to come together to solve the fiscal constraints in a manner that allows the District to continue to serve our community and remain fiscally solvent.

Fighting to address the systemic oppression that is baked into our public-school system takes courage and fortitude. As an organization taking on this fight, our employees cannot worry about potential layoffs, salary reductions, or impact to health benefits at the same time. The fiscal issue needs to get resolved in order to fully concentrate on the systemic racial issues. I'm placing my bet on the collective human spirit that we have in this organization and in our East Side community.

We, as an organization, are working hard to transform how we educate our children and serve our community. Thank you, in advance, for your continued support and hard work for our East Side Union High School District community. Thank you for the experience to lead our amazing community!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris D. Funk". The signature is stylized and somewhat abstract, with a large loop at the end.

Chris D. Funk  
Superintendent