

Friday Reflection

August 28, 2020

Early in the week, we found out the distance learning only model will give way to a hybrid model of learning on September 10. I actually heard the news in my neighborhood on an evening walk. As my neighbor explained the statement she received from TUSD, I immediately contemplated all that effort exuded to this point, and started to consider all that would need to be accomplished this week in preparation for shift to the hybrid plan.

I wasn't wrong, this week turned out to be a concerted effort of preparation and planning for not just September 10, but the days before it, in order to optimize the transition. I hosted multiple meetings this week with teachers and parents where I listened and offered answers when possible. This week was so dynamic that I found myself able to offer more answers with each subsequent meeting because of the behind the scenes work of planning and preparation.

Last night was our annual Title I meeting to communicate the use of federal funds we receive to support our learners. My secretary, Patty Lee, worked extremely hard to help prepare all the documents for this important meeting. We never know how many will show up, but we plan for any size group. The meeting this week was even more unpredictable because of the virtual dynamic. I logged in 15 minutes ahead of time just to be prepared. To my surprise, there was already a parent on board, and so we spent some time getting acquainted. As the time approached, more and more parents came on board. The little sound made by each entry made it difficult to speak at times. By the time we hit our peak, almost 100 parents were in the Google Meet session.

I thanked everyone for coming, muddled through (with help from others) getting everyone the documents through a link prepared earlier. I managed to get my presentation started by 6:05 and completed not long after 6:20. I thanked everyone for coming, and offered to stay on to answer any questions. For the next 40 minutes, a robust meeting broke out with people asking pressing questions in both English and Spanish. It was not antagonistic, but clearly the energy level rose. Our dear parents just wanted to be reassured that we had put in some thought on how to protect their children. As I was answering question after question, I couldn't help think back with gratitude for all the emphasis on planning and problem-solving the past couple of weeks.

Because I know that the questions last night were representative of so many others with similar questions, I thought I would share some of the plans for September 10th and beyond. This is not meant to answer every question, and I know we will experience some changes, but here is some of what I know now:

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Just over a third of our parents are opting to keep their students in distance learning during the hybrid. That means that we will have about 700 students in group A. These students will be on campus for both Monday and Thursday. About the same number of students will be in group B, attending on Tuesday and Friday. Wednesday will remain the same as it is now. (The exception to this is students with IEP's who will attend 5 days a week.)

The teacher will teach each period, each day, with all students. Some students will be sitting in front of the teacher, and the other students will be on line. We call this synchronous learning, everyone learning together at the same time.

For the students coming to school, they will all receive a cloth mask and be expected to wear one at all times. The same will hold true for employees. We will have temporary masks for anyone who forgets to bring their mask. As students come to zero and first period, they will all go into the classroom and take their temperature. Anyone who has a temperature of 100.4 or higher will be sent to the nurse's office. (By the way, Nurse Pham is our new nurse.) We will have two isolation rooms for students with fevers. Parents will be called and students with fevers will wait for parents in one of these rooms.

Transitioning classes will also be an important piece to our overall plan. Students in odd rooms on odd dates will be dismissed 30 seconds early from class. Students in even rooms will be dismissed 30 seconds early on even dates. We have arrows, signs and lines to direct traffic flow to minimize contact among people on campus. When a student enters a room, they will be asked to sanitize their hands and desk. We have ample supplies available.

Snack time will also be organized to minimize contact and crowds. 2nd period is an hour long so we can assign multiple snack times among groups of students. Food service will bring the food to these different locations to avoid lines and crowds in the cafeteria. Lunch will be after 6th period, so lunches will most likely be delivered to 6th period classes so students can immediately leave campus at the end of the day and not congregate for lunch.

There are so many layers of logistics we are working through. We have a document that requires plans for all this and more. We have meticulously worked through this document to make sure we have covered everything. Despite the attention to detail, I am sure there will be adjustments. The point I am trying to communicate is that we have a plan, and we care immensely about your child's safety and the safety of our employees. We are not opening school to get more money or anything of the sort. We

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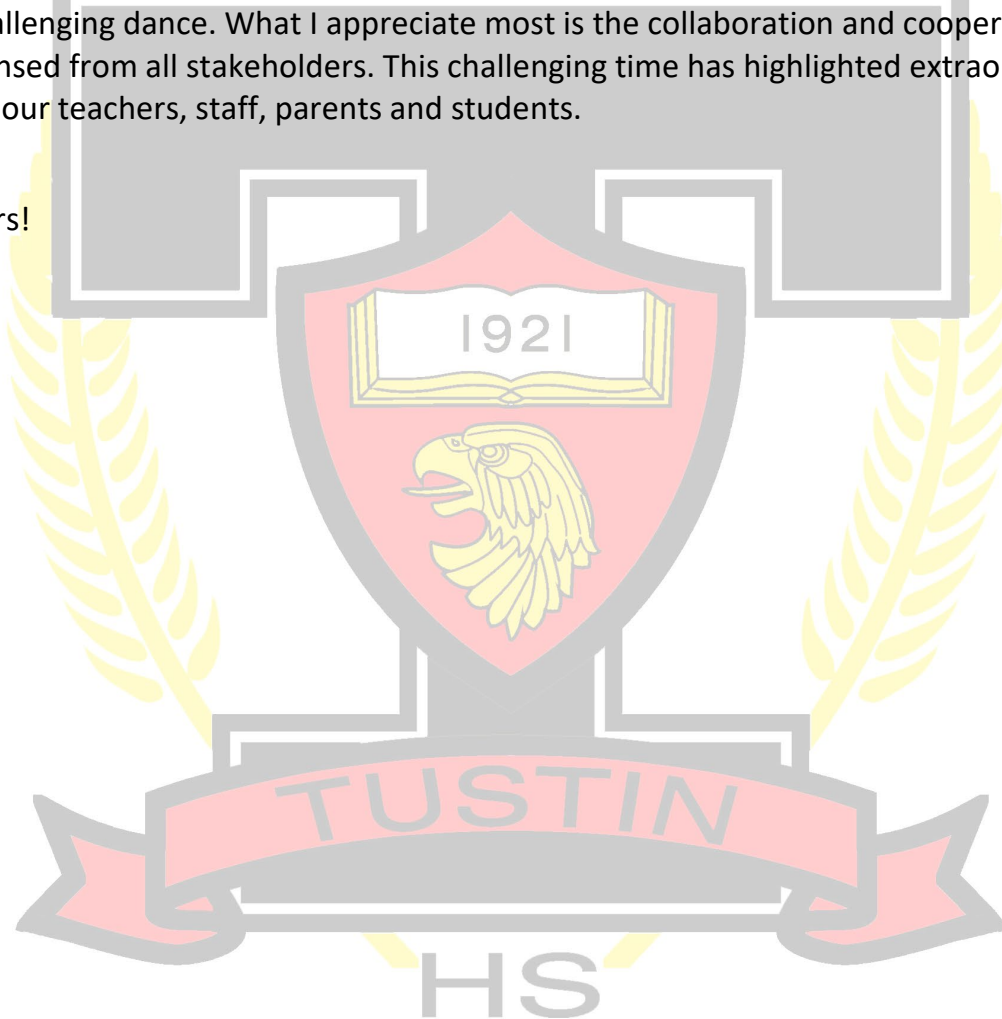
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are opening school because we believe it will benefit our students. By following all the CDC and local guidelines and regulations, we believe it is reasonably safe for people to be on campus. It will require monitoring and cooperation among all of us. We can do this.

I am so proud of how hard our teachers and classified staff have worked to make the best of distance learning. I know they will work just as hard to make the hybrid model even more effective. We are just living in a unique time. I want to thank all the parents who joined the Title I Meeting last night. It was impactful to see the energy for finding a way to keep their children safe, while still learning as much as possible. It continues to be a challenging dance. What I appreciate most is the collaboration and cooperation I have sensed from all stakeholders. This challenging time has highlighted extraordinary people, our teachers, staff, parents and students.

Go Tillers!



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