

September 6, 2021

Re: Repopulation and Return to School Update

Happy Labor Day LTUSD and Happy Labor Day to our dear and brave firefighters!

There is a lot to be grateful for today as our city begins the process of moving back in! With all that has transpired in the last few weeks, we are emotionally and physically exhausted, likely financially as well, but also motivated to get back to our routines and back to school! Collectively, we will make this happen for our children, their social-emotional needs, and the great importance of education.

Return to School: The District intends to reopen when every neighborhood is out of any kind of evacuation status - warning or mandatory. School sites will not open individually as families attend schools across all residential and school boundaries; we are Unified. Each of us has faced challenges, every individual has a story to tell, and this experience brings us together. We shall honor every individual and their circumstances in this process of repopulation by opening all school sites on the same day.

LTUSD is looking at every angle in our reopening efforts so that we can open school as soon as possible. At this time we are planning to open **3 days after the first notification that all evacuation orders have been lifted, to give families time to travel, clean homes and get settled, and then attend school on the 4th day. This would include Saturdays and Sundays. For example, if orders are lifted on Friday, school would start on Tuesday.** That said, many variables exist for a successful and healthy First Day of School opening:

School Sites are scheduled to be inspected and assessed for cleanliness and safe occupancy: LTUSD is working with partnering agencies to identify impacted schools and contract with professional remediation companies to ensure that impacted schools are 100% fit for occupancy. Air quality, surface cleanliness, and building safety will be assessed, and all smoke byproducts will be removed, before any schools are opened.

All current air filtration devices will receive new filters, air duct systems will be inspected and cleaned of all potential particulate matter. The District will be receiving approximately 350 additional devices to distribute to school sites. No burn damage to any school sites has been reported. All surfaces will be wiped clean and air will be thoroughly tested prior to re-entry.

All Hands on Deck! It's going to take a lot of hard work to get our school sites up and running. Rest assured our staff members are committed and ready with all of the energy and effort it will take to prepare the school sites for the first day of school. Designated staff members have been given permission to enter school sites to begin the cleaning process.

Availability of Local Resources: It is our understanding that there may be temporary shortages of gasoline, groceries, and other important resources, mainly due to staff shortages and delivery challenges. Please be sure that prior to returning home you obtain any necessary grocery, cleaning products, medications, gasoline, etc. The timeline for restoring these supplies to our community is unknown at this time.

Athletics at STMS/STHS: Athletic programs, including practices and competitions, will operate on the same return timeline as the return to school timeline.

Credit for a Full School Year: Under these clear emergency circumstances the District will apply to the State for a waiver for the lost school days which will result in credit for all students for a full school year. Certain calendar modifications may be necessary but are unknown at this time.

Air Quality: The previously established guidelines will remain in effect after school is opened:

1. If outside air quality is between 150 PM2.5 and 300 PM2.5 per [PurpleAir monitors](#) at or near our school sites, all staff and students are to remain indoors.
2. If outside air quality is over 300 (per PurpleAir) and is expected to stay above 300 we will cancel school (like a snow day). This will be determined by looking at the PurpleAir sensors at or near school sites; Levels at one school site alone will not be used to make the final decision. A combination of school sites above 300 will result in cancelation. The decision each day will be made no later than 6:30 am and communicated to staff by 6:45 am. If school is not cancelled and air quality worsens during the day, we will continue to monitor and shorten the school day if necessary.

Medical Services in SLT: With the repopulation of the city of South Lake Tahoe, Stateline and Zephyr Cove communities, Barton Health is providing medical services to the community. **Please see attached reopening message from Barton Health.**

Thank you to our Transportation Department, bus drivers, and mechanics, who have remained on call and continue to work each day to assist in our city's repopulation efforts.

Thank you to all agencies and responders on the ground and in temporary shelters, who continue to provide the SLT locals with excellent communication, expertise, manpower, and literal sacrifice of their lives, to save our community. There are no words to express the deep gratitude we all have for you and your families, many of which are members of the District's families. Thank you.

[Message from STPUD on returning to South Lake Tahoe homes](#) (South Tahoe Now/STPUD) When it becomes safe to return home after the Caldor Fire, please flush your waterline by running an outdoor hose bib for a few minutes or until the water runs clear. Water that has remained in your home's plumbing during evacuation periods can result in taste or odor issues. To resolve this issue, run each of your inside taps for a minute. [Read more...](#)

[Post-wildfire recovery - Returning Home](#) (Cal-Fire): Although wildfire damage can be immeasurable, the danger is not over after the flames are put out. Flash flooding and debris flows, structural damage, road instability, and damaged trees are just some of the dangers that exist after a wildfire. Keep these tips in mind. [Read more...](#)

As we regroup and clean up after this very surreal and sobering experience, we here at LTUSD can't express enough how excited we are to embrace our students and celebrate our reunification, resiliency, and the excitement of a new school year! With all things in perspective, we are all pretty darn lucky to still have our homes, our town, our blue skies, our rivers and lakes, and most importantly, each other.

Keep your prayers coming as we are not quite out of the woods, and let's keep hoping for the most positive end to this story, *The Fire of 2021*. The District will keep you posted - please stay safe and we'll all keep moving forward, together.

Thinking of you all,

Dr. Todd Cutler, Superintendent
Education Services Department
The whole LTUSD team