



# ORCUTT Union School District

*Where a Dedicated Staff Means Kids Come First*

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December 17, 2021

Hello Orcutt Parents and Community,

My name is Dr. Holly Edds and I am the Superintendent here in the Orcutt Union School District.

I would like to provide you with an update on this school year as we continue to navigate the education of our students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our district continues to follow the current guidance from the state and local health agencies that govern Santa Barbara County.

Our top priority is to keep our schools safely open, and our students and staff in school for in-person instruction. We could not do this alone and we want to thank you for your partnership in utilizing the student testing programs we are offering this year so we can use modified quarantine to keep our students attending for in-person instruction.

We also understand there are a lot of questions regarding the possibility of a vaccine mandate, we have a lot of questions as well. There isn't a lot of information out there about how the mandate would be implemented, including what types of exemptions families would be able to use such as medical, religious or personal belief.

The reason there isn't a lot of information at this time is that none of the regulations have been written yet, from what we understand that process won't occur until the FDA grants full approval to the COVID-19 vaccine. What we do know is there will not be a mandate from the state for this vaccine before next school year at the very earliest.

We also know that the school district is not mandating the vaccine. Any vaccine mandates we have here in our district are ones that are required by the State of California for attendance at school, the Orcutt Union School District does not mandate vaccines.

I can also share with you that any vaccine mandate that is implemented will have to go through a process – whether that is done through an executive order from the Governor, through the regulatory process (which requires public input), or through legislation authored by our state assembly and senate.

As I said earlier, none of this has happened yet and we do not know when or if it will take place. All we know is Governor Newsom held a press conference in October to share his intent to move in this direction.

I also want to acknowledge we continue to address social media challenges in our schools. Past challenges have included vandalism and violence against school employees. This week the challenges encouraged students to threaten violence against schools.

Please know we take these threats seriously and work closely with our law enforcement partners to identify them and address them. We did not receive any threats that were specific to any of our schools in this latest challenge. We have increased our student education, including work with the Sandy Hook Promise program and the See Something, Say Something campaign. We want to thank you for the important role you play in monitoring your children's social media accounts, and in having those important conversations about reporting what they hear and see to a trusted adult.

I want to take a moment to thank our incredible teachers and staff for everything they have done to carry us through to this point of the school year. Every single person in this district, and our community, is dedicated to supporting our students and each other and I am so grateful to be not only the Superintendent, but also a parent in the district.

I hope you and your family have a wonderful and restful Holiday Break. We look forward to seeing everyone in January! Happy Holidays everyone!

Holly Edds, Ed.D.  
Superintendent