

COVID-related FAQs for ITA Members (updated 9/15/20)

What guides the district and the board regarding the opening of school?

Everyone is following directives from the governor's office, the OC Department of Health, the California Department of Public Health, the CDC, and/or the California Department of Education. ITA is working with the district Task Force to implement whatever directives we receive. The goal is to have options in place for the Board to approve before July 6, but as the details and guidelines from the state and county change, the district plans will have to change as well. Here is a link to the state's most recent COVID guidelines for schools: <https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-schools.pdf>

Can we get reimbursed for our added costs for distance learning?

This is an issue for the bargaining team to address. If you need any equipment, please let your principal know as soon as possible. The district will take inventory of what will be needed if distance learning continues. You can also contact the IT "help" desk for equipment.

Will there be lay-offs or furlough days in our future?

The state budget has been severely impacted, but the state legislature had made some changes to the governor's budget which will make the impacts less severe. The district is not planning certificated lay-offs for 2020-21. Any changes to our contract regarding salary, working conditions, or benefits have to be bargained. The ITA and IUSD bargaining teams have several sessions scheduled over the summer.

Will our pensions be affected by this crisis?

[CalSTRS regarding Covid](#)

What is CTA's stance on school safety in the age of COVID?

[CTA regarding COVID](#)

What information is the district using to make its decisions?

The [guidelines from the CDPH](#) are considered along with the [OCDE Guidelines](#). But the guidelines do not tell schools how to implement the guidelines. Therefore, the district has surveyed staff and families to determine what general plans they might prefer and/or need. Also, the Task Force is brainstorming questions and details that will have to be considered to ensure everyone's safety is assured and learning can continue in the best safest way possible. This is an evolving process, but we have sketched out the options beyond the online-only option; you will see those outlines in the district survey. As of this

date, the staff survey data is still being compiled, but preliminary results indicate that the percentages of preferences are very closely aligned with those from the parents.

What if I or someone in my family becomes ill for an extended time?

The federal government has allocated an additional 10 days of paid leave for anyone who has to miss work for a COVID-related situation. There are a number of leaves as well. If you need to be absent for an extended period of time, call or email HR HR@iusd.org and they will help you figure out the best way for you to stay home safely with as little financial impact as possible. All of the [leave information](#) is posted on the district website.

What if students become sick while at school?

Parents will be provided training about screening their children every day before taking them to school. A nurse or health clerk will wear special protective gear to monitor a child while waiting for a parent to take the child home. After that, disinfecting and notification protocols will be followed. The state and OC guidelines have more details about these procedures.

How are schools preparing for our return?

The district is in acquisition mode for PPE, technology, and more—all in preparation for the re-opening of school. Maintenance and Operations has created a system to ensure the warehouse is up-to-date with orders for gloves, soap, cleaning supplies, etc. along with a master list of vendors to keep supplies in stock. They have 12,000 face shields and 12,000 cloth masks for staff, along with professional grade PPE for nurses and students who are vulnerable. We will be encouraged to use our own PPE and not share. The district also hired an air quality firm to analyze all sites, then followed all their recommendations regarding HVAC filters, air purifiers, etc.

What about high school sports?

CIF rules are created based on district decisions, and most districts are still in the process of creating their plans.

What will classrooms look like?

Guidelines include separating students from each other as much as possible, keeping cohort groups together, monitoring for symptoms, providing training in safety, providing hand-washing stations and opportunities, and more. Staff members are to remain at least 6 feet away from students. Times for arrivals, lunch, recess, and dismissal will be staggered to minimize contact with students outside the cohort group. There may be

transparent panels around student desks to create study carrels. All of this is still being planned, so these details could change.

If I have to be an online teacher only because of my health, will I be able to return to my home school when the pandemic ends?

Although the online teachers will have a new cohort of colleagues and support for their role, they will remain as well part of their home site's staff. The sense of community is more important than ever during this time of forced separation, so every effort will be made to maintain connections with site colleagues. Each situation will depend on when online teachers return and what is happening at each site. The district values stability and returning to normal as much as possible when the time is right. Returning staff to their home schools will be a priority.

What is the difference between the OC Board of Education and the OC Department of education?

OCDE and the elected County Superintendent Dr. Al Mijares have worked with local school district leaders to develop "Orange County Together: A guide to safely reopening schools in the COVID-19 era," which is linked above. It is in alignment with the guidance of California Department of Public Health and stresses the importance of social distancing and face coverings when social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. The five-member OC Board of Education, which has separate responsibilities, has been hosting meetings to discuss a white paper with alternative recommendations.

The board majority's recommendations are not binding; they have no authority over the 29 local OC districts in this matter. Locally elected school boards and superintendents approve and implement plans specific to their districts based on the needs of their schools and communities using the guidance of the OCDE, the CDC, and the state Department of Public Health. OCDE supports districts in that effort and many others. They remain 100 percent committed to following and sharing the guidance of the California Department of Public Health and the Orange County Health Care Agency. [Statement from OCDE Supt. Al Mijares](#)

How can I watch the IUSD school board meeting?

[IUSD.tv](#) is the link for the live broadcast. You can find their meeting schedule at the IUSD website. A video of the meeting is now available online.

What is CTA saying about school safety?

Here's a [letter](#) from CTA President E Toby Boyd to state leaders about schools opening safely. ITA sent a copy of this to all of IUSD's School Board Members as well as Superintendent Walker.

What did the IUSD School Board decide regarding the start of school?

They voted to require face coverings for everyone on a school site at all times with some exceptions for certain individuals, eating lunch, etc.

They heard descriptions of all of the sample models presented by the district leaders. Then they voted for elementary schools to offer "traditional," hybrid, and online models. The secondary schools will offer blended/online and hybrid models.

Keep in mind that during COVID, every decision is tentative. As guidelines from the state and/or county change, so will these plans.

How will expectations of teachers be determined?

When the State Senate approved amendments to the governor's funding budget for schools, they added provisions in SB 98 that specified particular elements are required during online learning, including both synchronous and asynchronous instruction for minimum periods of time. Other elements of teachers' expectations will be managed within the terms of our contract for working conditions; some parts may need to be bargained. This is still very much a work in progress.

What if I have questions that ITA cannot answer?

The district has created an [FAQ page for staff](#) to provides an opportunity to ask questions. The district just sent an email with more information including links to detailed descriptions of the various models.

Will all teachers have access to the resources of the Virtual Academy? When will those be available to us?

The district is finalizing the contract with the vendor and will be provisioning and creating Master Canvas Shells in the next month with FLVS and our IT department. Not all secondary courses have FVA equivalents; some do have IUSD Blended Learning curriculum, however. The goal is to let staff access the content as soon as possible. They are working on it daily and hope to have it available soon.

Is IUSD applying for the waiver that would allow elementary schools to open now?

The district exploring the requirements to apply for a waiver, but it's a complicated lengthy process, and it looks as though we will be back to some in-person learning before an application could be completed and approved.

How strict are the schedules currently being shared by principals?

The graphics that illustrate what a typical week might look like for teachers and for students within each academic model (Virtual Academy/Distance Learning or Hybrid Model) at each level have been undergoing some changes. ITA is working with the district in the planning and development stage as new guidance comes out on a weekly, and sometimes daily, basis. Each graphic provides an example of what a typical week and day might look like for teachers. Actual instructional lesson formats, subject areas, and content will vary from teacher to teacher and student to student, so there is flexibility within each model.

What does “live meaningful interaction” mean?

This is a daily requirement from the State Senate, but everyone is waiting for the California Department of Education to provide clarification, which hasn't come yet.

What are the limits on class sizes?

To accommodate distancing when we return to in-person instruction, the in-person models should have fewer students than usual. To facilitate that, the online classes may be somewhat larger. If your class sizes exceed the class size limits in the contract, however, notify your administrator. They are still enrolling new students and trying to balance sections, so the numbers may still be adjusted if needed.

Is there compensation for class sizes that exceed the contract maximum?

The bargaining team will be discussing compensation for student numbers that are over the contract limits: 33 for K, 32 for 1-3, 35 for 4-6, and 187 for secondary. The contract specifies the compensation in Appendix A .

Is there compensation for combo classes?

Yes. The contract allows 3 release days which can be paid out as 3 days of sub pay instead. Let your principal's administrative assistant know when and how you want to be compensated for teaching a combo class.

Are we required to attend meetings in person?

All meetings will have a virtual option for attendance via the internet for anyone who chooses to attend virtually.

Will meetings be safe?

For any meeting, the maximum attendance allowed by the governor is 10, and then everyone must be distanced 6 feet and wear masks. The district also requires face masks for everyone on a school site, with the specific health exceptions outlined in the CDPH. Every school or district meeting is required to offer a virtual option for those who need it. All ITA meetings will be held virtually.

How will Sites be choosing their ITA Site Reps now that some are part of the IVA?

Each site is asked to provide at least one on-site Representative and one IVA representative for the ITA Representative Council.

How can new teachers join ITA?

Educators can [join CTA online!](#) Once their membership form is completed online, we will be notified and will make sure they get additional printed information specific to ITA.

How will the district manage Covid testing and contact tracing?

Currently the district is looking into hiring an outside firm to do Covid testing for staff members. The county is also offering free testing at the OC Fairgrounds and Anaheim Convention Center. And the city of Irvine is offering free testing at the Great Park for residents and employees. The site principals and nurses will manage contact tracing.

How will the PLC teams use their 4 days now that teachers cannot request substitutes? PLC teams can take time outside of the work day. If everyone on the team attends, they can be compensated with sub pay, \$125/day. It's possible to split the day in half, but the pay would still be sub pay split in half.

How will teachers of grades 4-6 in the traditional model get their release time?

The science and music teachers will take students in halves, but the school site will need to work out a schedule to take the other half of the students for other instructional activities so teachers can have their release time, as per contract.

How will evaluations and adjunct duties work this year?

The bargaining team is still working on this. The temporary and probationary teachers will be evaluated as usual, and we are working on some options in the process for

teachers who have permanent status. Already, the deadlines have been extended for goal-setting, adjunct duty assignments, and a few other things.

Check the [IUSD Staff Covid Resource Page](#) for further information about the models, online resources, and more.