



## RESCUE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

*"Educating for the Future Together"*

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May 29, 2020

Dear Rescue families,

Congratulations! We made it. Whew! It has been heartwarming and special to participate in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade promotion drive-through parades on Thursday and Friday. What amazing students, families, and teachers we have. My heart is full. I am so very proud of our students, families, teachers, and staff. Robin Sharma once said, "Starting strong is good. Finishing strong is epic." This school year certainly could be remembered as the year of the PG & E power outages and a global pandemic that closed our classrooms. However, it can also be remembered as the year we all pulled together to support one another, a year where we were given the gift of time to connect with our families in different, deeper ways, a year where we were able to do special things together at home, remain positive, and help one another remain calm despite the adversity, struggle, loss, and also joy. Thank you for all you did to support your children, partner with us, and make the best of this crazy year. You DID finish strong, and it IS truly epic!

I wanted to share an update with you regarding Rescue's re-entry plan for August. We know our staff, students, and families are eager to know what school will look like in the fall. After discussing this important topic with the Rescue Board of Trustees at the May study session on May 26, Rescue Union School District has decided to plan for school to start as normally as possible in August, five days per week. We know that our schools play a vital role in the economic and social health of our community, providing food, childcare, social-emotional support, and of course, of paramount importance, the education of our kiddos. Our goal is to resume operations so that the magic our teachers and staff provide students can once again be experienced to the fullest by all. With that said, we also know that student and staff health must also be of paramount importance during these unprecedented times. We understand that some families may not feel comfortable sending their children back to school. For those families we will be offering a program where students can learn from home. It will be a comprehensive, standards aligned online program, with specific teachers assigned to those groups of students, depending upon the number who desire that option. Furthermore, we will continue monitoring guidelines put forth by The California Department of Education, El Dorado County Public Health, and we will also continue collaborating closely with the El Dorado County Office of Education, district superintendents, and our teachers and staff as we develop our re-entry plans for August. These plans will include sanitation and disinfectant protocols, barriers to prevent the spread of germs and viruses, playground use modifications, transportation and food service adaptations, and a host of other things, all to ensure the safety and well-being of our students and staff.

At the Board of Trustees May study session the Board also discussed the state of our budget, which, along with the entire state, has taken a devastating hit as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Reduced tax revenues and other negative factors have resulted in a 7.9% reduction in base funding for our Rescue schools. We will need to make significant cuts in the future. For the 2020-2021 school year we have so far identified over \$1.6 million in reductions to the budget, and we will use about \$2.5 million of reserves to fill the remaining deficit. These cuts are unfortunate to say the least, but we have prioritized student and

Cheryl Olson, Superintendent

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staff needs to the greatest extent possible, and at this time, we have no plans to lay off any permanent staff members. We are doing all we can to protect people's ability to serve our community. We are only reducing positions where contracts have ended or when people have retired or left for another position. With that said, we will still need to identify about three million dollars of additional cuts during the 2020-2021 school year to be applied in 2021-2022. These will be difficult conversations, but the District and our teachers and staff remain committed to working together to find solutions. We will also reach out to our families for suggestions and input as we navigate this process together. We will let you know how you can be involved.

Thank you again for allowing us the privilege of serving you and partnering with us to educate your children. I am honored to be part of this amazing district too. Be watching over the summer for specific information regarding next year as you will have some choices offered. Have a wonderful summer. Be sure to take opportunity to relax, refresh, and enjoy. You deserve the best. As always, if you have questions or suggestions, please reach out to us. We are here for you.

With gratitude,  
Cheryl Olson, Superintendent