

**From:** Gregory Smith  
**Sent:** Friday, August 20, 2021 3:10 PM  
**Subject:** PLEASE READ: Fall Semester Health and Safety Protocols - UPDATE  
**Importance:** High

Hello SDCCD Community,

This email provides more specific information on the health and safety protocol announcements made in Chancellor Turner Cortez's "CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19: UPDATE #23" email on Tuesday, August 10<sup>th</sup>.

Below you will find important information regarding:

- 1) **Phased-in Reopening During the Fall Semester**
- 2) **Current COVID-19 Data Informing District Protocols**
- 3) **COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Protocols for Employees and Students**
- 4) **Instruction and Student Services Operations for the Fall Semester**
- 5) **Planning for Spring 2022**

**Please read this entire email carefully.**

Since the District was forced to suspend in-person instruction and services in March 2020, the extraordinary efforts of Faculty, Classified Professionals, Supervisors, and Managers have allowed us to continue successfully serving many of our students and community members. Our students have been resilient, creative, and determined as they have figured out ways to continue their education online and remotely. While many students have been able to make the transition successfully, too many of our students have been overwhelmed by the physical and mental health impacts of COVID-19, job loss and financial insecurity, child and adult care needs, housing and food insecurity, and inadequate access to the technology resources necessary to participate and succeed in an online and remote educational environment. The negative impacts have not been experienced equally across our communities and our most vulnerable students have suffered much worse outcomes in too many instances.

Our efforts to reopen the District safely are directly and specifically focused on serving the students and communities most negatively impacted by COVID-19 and most in need of our onsite, in-person instruction and services. The California Community College system and the San Diego Community College District are unique in our mission to offer everyone an opportunity to pursue and complete their higher education goals and transform their quality of life. Striving to reopen our District safely, while we continue to deal with the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, is an ambitious and complex endeavor. It is what our communities need and a challenge we can meet.

**Summary of Key Health and Safety Protocols and Phased-In Reopening Timelines**

For quick review, here are the health and safety protocols for the San Diego Community College District during the fall semester. Further details are covered in the subsequent sections of this email.

- **All students must be vaccinated or have a negative COVID-19 test** within the prior seven (7) days to attend in-person instructional activities or appointments for services.
- **All employees must be vaccinated or have a negative COVID-19 test** within the prior seven (7) days, regardless of work location, including remote work assignments.

- All employees, students, and visitors to a District facility must self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms and stay away from any District facility if they reasonably suspect they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- **All individuals must wear face coverings** while indoors, while outdoors and unable to maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from others, while riding in vehicles with others, and as further explained in the District's [COVID Prevention Plan](#) (see page 10), regardless of vaccination status.
- In-person services to students, prospective students, and the public reasonably expected to last 15 minutes or more will be conducted by appointment, including verification of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test within the prior seven (7) days. In-person reception and services reasonably expected to be provided in less than 15 minutes may be provided without an appointment and without verification of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test.
- The District will provide face coverings to any individual who does not have an acceptable face covering while onsite.
- The District will provide a N-95 face mask to anyone who requests one and provide employees access to training on proper use of N-95 masks.
- Beginning August 16<sup>th</sup>, employees may be required to return to in-person work assignments up to two (2) days per week.
- Beginning September 7<sup>th</sup>, employees may be required to return to in-person work assignments up to four (4) days per week.
- Beginning September 20<sup>th</sup>, employees may be required to return to in-person work assignments up to full-time.
- Workplace flexibilities, including modified days, hours, onsite, remote work assignments may continue to be used during the fall semester as a safety measure to decrease the number of people present in workspaces, classrooms, and other facilities and provide greater physical distancing.

As we continue welcoming students and prospective students back to our campuses, it is important to remember that no one safety measure is 100% effective at preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is the consistent use of a combination of measures that keeps us all safe. Getting vaccinated, testing regularly, wearing face coverings, maintaining physical distance, upgrading air filtration systems, avoiding unnecessary extended close contacts, staying away when we do not feel well, sanitizing and disinfecting more frequently, washing our hands and practicing good hygiene...all of these proactive measures working together will ensure we have safe and healthy work and education environments. Please join us in a community of compassion and mutual respect and keep yourself and others safe by following these protocols.

### **Phased-In Reopening During the Fall Semester**

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, we announced a return-to-onsite work timeline and health and safety protocols for the fall semester. In the seven weeks since then, the Delta variant has resulted in a significant increase in the COVID-19 infection rate around the world and in San Diego County. While our county is benefitting from relatively high vaccination rates among eligible adults as compared to other regions of the United States, the sudden and dramatic rise in COVID-19 infections requires us to amend our protocols with key protections for all employees, students, and visitors to our campuses.

Many courses planned for in-person and hybrid instruction in the fall are proceeding as planned. With the incredible efforts of our Educational Services, IT, and Marketing professionals, over 86% of the

students (more than 8,300 individuals) who have enrolled in these courses have provided and been cleared with valid vaccination documentation and approved medical exemptions.

Onsite Student Services are resuming in a limited capacity at each of the colleges. Over the course of the semester, we expect to be able to gradually increase the available services and number of students we can serve. Each college is creating and updating plans to adapt the ways we meet and receive current and prospective students, schedule and conduct appointments for services, and engage with each other in-person with multiple layers of health and safety protections in place.

As our local public health conditions change, our plans will evolve, we will learn and adapt, and we will continue to pursue a safe and full reopening of our District.

### **Current COVID-19 Data Informing District Protocols**

Throughout the spring, COVID-19 cases in San Diego County declined dramatically, allowing us to accelerate our phased-in reopening plans. As the state initiated its reopening plan on June 15<sup>th</sup> and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) announced fully vaccinated individuals could remove their face coverings and gather without physical distancing, the Delta variant was spreading across the country. Over the course of July, we have observed case rates increase from fewer than two per 100,000 residents to over 50. However, unlike previous periods of rapid spread of COVID-19, the current spread is occurring overwhelmingly among individuals who are not vaccinated.

In the last week of July (25<sup>th</sup> through the 31<sup>st</sup>), there were 55.7 average daily cases of COVID-19 among unvaccinated individuals in San Diego County. During that same time, the case rate among fully vaccinated individuals was 6.0. From July 19<sup>th</sup> through August 17<sup>th</sup>, there were 28,686 COVID-19 cases in the county, 89% (25,606) of those cases were among individuals who are not vaccinated.

Currently, more than 2.1 million residents have received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine in the county and just over 700,000 residents are unvaccinated. Over the last 30 days there have been 3,080 cases among 2.1 million vaccinated residents and 25,606 cases among 700,000 unvaccinated residents. That is 14 cases per 10,000 vaccinated residents and 3.6 cases per 100 unvaccinated residents.

The data in our county are clear, the risk of COVID-19 infection is exponentially higher for our unvaccinated employees, students, and community members. As a result, our health and safety protocols are being adjusted to provide protections where they are needed most.

State and local COVID-19 case data, along with cases among the District's employees and students, are updated weekly on our website: <https://www.sdccd.edu/about/departments-and-offices/human-resources/risk-management/covid-employees.aspx>.

### **COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Protocols for Employees**

With the Delta variant impacting our unvaccinated populations so significantly, as announced by Chancellor Turner Cortez, **the District will require all employees who have not provided proof of vaccination to be tested for COVID-19 weekly effective August 30th**. If you have not provided your [vaccination confirmation](#) or [vaccination exemption](#) form, please do so promptly. More information about completing this process is available here:

<https://www.sdccd.edu/docs/HumanResources/risk/Vaccination%20Form%20FAQs.pdf>

This requirement applies to all employees, regardless of the reason they are unvaccinated and their work location. This means employees teaching and working remotely must be tested for COVID-19 weekly.

This follows District policies for TB testing, background checks, sexual harassment training, and other requirements that apply to everyone regardless of work location. We must all be ready to report to work onsite if needed and this requirement will ensure we can do so safely. With emergency provisions for remote Brown Act meetings ending in September, some participatory governance meetings will be required to resume onsite and in-person. As we phase-in more in-person services, fewer work assignments will be able to be performed remotely. By getting vaccinated or testing for COVID-19 regularly, we are serving the best interests of the health and safety of our community.

**Employees who have not provided documentation showing they are fully vaccinated are directed to be tested for COVID-19 weekly. Testing must occur during an employee's paid work time.**

Supervisors may direct when Classified Professionals, NANCE, and other employees in hourly pay positions are released from their regular duties to get tested, so long as it occurs during their regularly scheduled work shift. Employees are not authorized to earn overtime to get tested for this requirement. Supervisors may authorize overtime when needed for employees to complete work that could not be conducted during regular work shifts due to attending a testing appointment.

Faculty, exempt Professionals, Supervisors, and Managers must schedule testing appointments to avoid interfering with their work assignments to the extent possible. For example, a manager should not schedule a testing appointment in conflict with a meeting they are typically required or expected to attend and faculty should not schedule testing appointments during synchronous class sessions.

**Beginning August 30<sup>th</sup>, the District will provide onsite COVID-19 testing at no cost to employees during regular business hours** at City College, Mesa College, and Miramar College. If possible, the District will provide onsite COVID-19 testing at or near the District Office, District Service Center, and District Police Department. Where possible, the District will provide onsite COVID-19 testing at Continuing Education facilities. Our ability to provide onsite testing at a specific location depends on meeting a minimum number of testing appointments, so some sites will not have onsite testing available.

Specific details on testing locations, days and hours, procedures for making a testing appointment, and guidance related to the testing requirement are being finalized and will be communicated in a follow up message the week of August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Employees may choose to be tested at any available COVID-19 testing location to comply with this requirement. While COVID-19 testing is covered by medical insurance or federal funding in most cases, **employees who choose to be tested at an alternative site will not be reimbursed for any tests costs they incur**. San Diego County has numerous free public testing sites located throughout the county. A full schedule of testing locations, days and hours of operation, and walk up or drive up services is available online:

[https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community\\_epidemiology/dc/2019-nCoV/testing/testing-schedule.html](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community_epidemiology/dc/2019-nCoV/testing/testing-schedule.html)

Specific directions on how employees who are tested at an alternative testing location will provide documentation they have been tested will be provided in a follow up message next week. Employees who are not fully vaccinated or have not provided documentation of vaccination need to be tested the week of August 23<sup>rd</sup> to be compliance when this requirement becomes effective on August 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Employees required to be tested weekly who fail to comply with this requirement will be placed on unpaid administrative leave until they have been tested.** Human Resources will monitor compliance with this requirement and notify employees, managers, and supervisors as needed when an employee will be placed on unpaid leave.

**At this time, fully vaccinated employees who have submitted their valid documentation, are not required to be tested for COVID-19.** Any employee may choose to participate in testing provided by the District voluntarily at no cost.

### **COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Protocols for Students and the Public**

**All students participating in onsite instruction and individuals attending student services appointments must be vaccinated or tested for COVID-19 within the prior seven (7) days.** Students have been notified of this requirement by Educational Services, which is effective August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Faculty teaching in-person and hybrid courses will be notified when students are not cleared to participate in in-person instructional activities. Students will receive notifications and reminders each week of this requirement and will be notified when they are not cleared for in-person instruction. Additional details on how Faculty, Classified Professionals, and others who need to know a student's clearance status will be provided in a follow up communication.

**At this time, fully vaccinated students who have submitted their valid documentation, are not required to be tested for COVID-19.** Any student may choose to participate in testing provided by the District voluntarily.

### **Student Services Operations for the Fall Semester**

During the fall semester, services to students will be conducted remotely or via appointment with vaccination clearance or a negative COVID-19 test within the prior seven (7) days. Services and information that may be provided briefly (reasonably expected to require less than 15 minutes) will be provided at welcome stations following the District's health and safety protocols. Services that require more than 15 minutes will be conducted by appointment with confirmation of vaccination or a recent negative COVID-19 test.

**Procedures for confirming an individual's vaccination or testing clearance will be provided in a follow up communication.**

Each College is currently planning for phased-in onsite services for students and the public, including general and program-specific counseling services. The Colleges will coordinate the availability of in-person services for consistency. Reopening plans are reviewed and approved by the District's Risk Management Department for compliance with the health and safety protocols and the [COVID Prevention Plan](#).

## Planning for Spring 2022

Our goal is to fully resume onsite activities in the spring 2022 semester. The fall semester will be an important time for everyone to participate in the planning. Announcements on spring 2022 operations will be made with as much advanced notice as possible, including whether the vaccination and testing requirements will continue.

Earlier this week the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced vaccine booster doses will be available in the fall. The District will monitor this development and provide further information on how this will impact our definition of “fully vaccinated” and the COVID-19 testing requirement.

Please look for follow up messages next week with more specific details about the District’s onsite testing program.

Thank you,

Greg

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