



THE APT SPOTLIGHT

February 19, 2021

Following are excerpts from the remarks of two APT members who spoke at the School Board Meeting.

APT appreciates and understands that it has been difficult for everyone involved, our staff, students, and the community, to navigate the twists and turns regarding reopening our schools for a safe return to in-person instruction. However, it appears that the goal posts change too frequently. APT was first informed of the District's intent to open T-K to 2nd grade at six elementary schools for designated students. Then it changed to twelve elementary schools. Then it changed to T-K to sixth grade at all elementary schools. Then it was changed back to twelve schools. This confusion creates **ANXIETY, FEAR AND STRESS** for everyone.

The APT Executive Board approved a "Safe Return to In-Person Instruction" Resolution that was developed by APT's Organizing Team. The Resolution was presented at the February 17, 2021 School Board Meeting. APT members received the Resolution on February 18, 2021 and it is also posted on APT's website. Thank you to the approximately 100 APT members who sent personal emails to the District sharing your personal story and supporting our Resolution. APT also wants to thank our members who attended the School Board meeting and to those who addressed the Board with their comments. Your collective action makes a difference.

APT was pleased to hear from Superintendent Martinez at the meeting that no date has been set to reopen schools. He was clear that "the big day is not here yet". If that is the case, then why has the District been tossing out arbitrary dates over the last several weeks? The District is required to submit a safety plan that must be filed with the State and County. Additionally, the safety of our members and working conditions are subject to collective bargaining. Your APT Core Bargaining Team and Support Staff Specialists begin these negotiations with the District on February 19th and 22nd.

In addition to health and safety protocols, readily available vaccines are another critical issue for our members. LA County has now advised that teachers are in the queue to receive vaccines beginning March 1st. But getting in line for a vaccine and having sufficient availability are two different things. The bottom line is that our educators do not want to risk their lives when adequate protections are not in place.

"I am an Education Specialist working with 4-6th grade students at Philadelphia Elementary School. I have been part of the PUSD family for three years. I write to you today in support of the APT "Safe Return to In-Person Instruction" Resolution presented by our APT President, Manuela Echeverria. We believe that decisions made around face-to-face instruction must prioritize the health and safety of our students, staff and the community. Furthermore, I would like there to be an emphasis in returning to in-person instruction after having the opportunity to be vaccinated. The Resolution is important because it emphasizes needing sinks, non-circulating air, access to hand sanitizers, and PPE. Currently I teach in a portable classroom without a sink, and I am unsure of the availability of hand sanitizer or other cleaning products."

Ivy Sanchez-Tinoco

"I am a third grade teacher at Vejar School (home of the Mighty Raccoons). I speak to you this evening in support of the APT "Safe Return to In-Person Instruction" Resolution, which was presented to you by our President, Manuela Echeverria. I believe that decisions made around in-person instruction must prioritize the health and safety of our students, all staff and the community."

I applaud the efforts of our union and the district in regard to having discussions on how to best open our schools. However, I am deeply concerned that these efforts are just those...discussions. As an educator for this beloved school district, I want to feel assured that the decisions made by the district are in agreement with my union and its membership. We cannot afford misconceptions and misinformation. Our district's priority during this crisis must focus on health and safety of its students and most importantly, its teachers and support staff. I believe that we can only reopen schools when they are safe.

Our students have taught us to PERSEVERE under difficult circumstances. We have seen love ones become very ill (Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles), and together in my classroom, we have mourned the loss of family members due to COVID. These kids have seen it all. These incredible children have seen horror, yet they continue to move forward. I ask the same of the School Board. Let us look forward together by being PERSISTENT in the health and safety of all stakeholders and PERSEVERE under difficult circumstances to make the right decisions in providing a safe return to school."

Miguel Arraraz