

CONTACT:

Pope Valley Union Elementary School District
Ken J. Burkhart, Teacher/Principal/Superintendent
kburkhart@pvk8.org | (707) 339-8929



For Immediate Release

POPE VALLEY SCHOOL TO START SCHOOL YEAR EARLY

POPE VALLEY (NAPA COUNTY), CA, May 22. The Board of Trustees for the Pope Valley Union Elementary School District unanimously adopted on May 21 a modified calendar for the 2020-2021 academic year that attempts to mitigate a possible fall, winter, or spring closure due to a resurgence of COVID-19.

The district's single school will now open on Monday, July 20, four weeks earlier than originally planned. Anticipating the need to close and return to online learning, the district is attempting to have as much in-seat time as possible before the transition back to online learning.

Additionally, as adopted, the calendar includes multiple breaks throughout the school year.

"After two months of teaching online, we have seen that students and staff are becoming less enthusiastic and productive with online school. I really noticed it about week six," said Ken J. Burkhart, Teacher/Principal/Superintendent. "We hope that by having multiple breaks, students and staff will be able to recharge."

With adoption of this modified calendar and early start date, the board recognizes that families and staff are going to be asked to do something different with little notice and that it will create a burden on many. The district surveyed stakeholders about possible start dates, with results mixed. "It was clear that many wanted to return at the normal time, while many wanted to start early. Several were in the camp of wanting to split the difference and open only two weeks early. In the end, the board decided to start as early as possible, recognizing that due to COVID fears several students may not return to campus, no matter what the start date," added Burkhart.

Recognizing the need to make the decision regarding the start of the school year as early as possible to allow staff and parents to adjust plans, the board left open the possibility of adjusting the calendar later in the year depending on the actual conditions at the time. "The Board is committed to hearing from the community as we move through these trying times. The board felt ensuring students were in school for as much time as possible was in the best interest of the community," said Paul Kimsey, Ph.D., Board President.

Pope Valley Union Elementary School District operates a single school that serves a small population of about fifty TK-8th grade students in rural northeastern Napa County.