When I founded the first PUC school 22 years ago, I never imagined a scenario where campuses across the nation would sit vacant for months on end. When the unfathomable happens, you start asking questions, and the main ones on my mind have been, what did it all mean and what have we learned? What are the lessons that we should take away from this pandemic and carry forward?

First, we learned that kids are resilient. They can learn—and learn well—even in the face of extreme adversity when we give them the right supports and resources. We must make sure that they have the right tools and supplies, and they must know that they matter—that they are loved. With that formula, students will always rise to the occasion.

Second, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of supporting students’ mental and emotional health and wellbeing. This year crystallized for educators that when students are not emotionally and mentally whole, they will not be able to learn. That’s why I’m so proud that ever since I founded the first school in 1999, mental health has always been prioritized. When campuses closed, the mental health team was already in place for students, families, and staff. The clinical counseling program has established partnerships with many universities that guarantee a total of 40 counselors every day to conduct daily wellness check-ins and facilitate family phone calls. During the pandemic, that number went up to more than 70 counselors to meet the demand.

Third, I’m proud that in the PUC culture, a foundational element has always been that students and staff care for the well-being of all. What kept us strong was that we are a family at PUC—a close-knit community—and we were there for each other. Many in the PUC family experienced unspeakable tragedies, complications from financial hardship, anxiety and depression and we found a way to help each other as much as possible.

Now, though, is not the time to get comfortable or complacent. This is the time to double down. PUC’s expansive mental health program will continue to provide an elevated level of counseling services for our students, families, and staff. The need now is greater than ever. The effects of traumatic events can emerge long after the trauma recedes. How we help students address what they’re feeling will determine how well they learn and how well they treat others, which in turn will affect the health of our society not just now, but in the long term.

This last year changed all of us, but at PUC we’re committed to ensuring that we stay on the path to achieving our vision of success for all. We will use what we’ve learned to become stronger and grow, as we have done for the past 22 years.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of what PUC students are taught: We must care for each other.
AUGUST 2020

In the spring of 2020, our schools pivoted from in-person learning to distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To start the 2020-2021 school year on August 17, 2020, we remained completely virtual. Though we continued with distance learning, we also continued to serve meals to all of our students at our distribution centers, which had continuously been serving food since the beginning of the pandemic.
SEPTEMBER 2020

By September, our students became adjusted to the new school year and their schedules. Our schools continued regular traditions like Back to School Night and “Coffee with the Principal,” all while staying virtual. Our clinical counseling team continued reaching out to families and students to offer supports, including webinars, which we shared out on social media. This month, we also started our Fall 2020 Webinar Series “Countdown to Independence” in support of students’ academic, personal social & career development.
OCTOBER 2020

In October, our schools found ways to keep spirits up by having virtual spirit weeks and encouraging students to dress up for Halloween. Some of our schools were even able to host in-person (socially distanced) fall events. Meanwhile, we had hearings for the charter renewals of four schools in front of the LAUSD school board. We finished the month strong with the announcement that multiple campuses would serve as voting centers for the presidential election for the first time ever!
NOVEMBER 2020

We began this month with three sites serving as voting centers for the 2020 Presidential Election in support of PUC’s commitment to uplift our communities now and forever. Our schools continued to teach our students and support families as they continued with distance learning. The “Countdown to Independence” webinar series concluded after 8 sessions with students and parents. By the end of the month, our students and staff were able to take a break during the week of Thanksgiving. During that time, the charters for four of our schools were renewed by LAUSD!
DECEMBER 2020

The school year had been one that was unlike any other due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The month of December was no different, but still our schools infused holiday cheer into our students to get them to our winter break.
JANUARY 2021

We started 2021 by welcoming students back (virtually) for a new semester. Our schools remained well connected to students and families and maintained high daily attendance rates. In this same month, one of our schools, PUC Inspire Charter Academy, began offering COVID testing for students, families, staff members, and community members. We ended the month with the Great Kindness Challenge.
In the month of February, we began our “PUC Career Convos,” a series of webinars that was intended for middle and high school students to gain insight and learn real-world steps to achieve career success from experts in various industries. We also announced our “Senior Send-Off” webinar series, which began this month. Our schools continued finding ways to connect with students, with offerings such as “lunch mixers.”
In February, we informed families and staff members that based on current guidance, we had the opportunity to return for some in-person instruction. This month, we announced that all of our schools would reopen for targeted in-person supports for students. We continued with distance learning while simultaneously preparing to reopen our campuses to welcome students and staff back. At this time, our high school students began receiving college acceptance letters and we continued our “PUC Career Convos” with students.
APRIL 2021

In the month of April, all of our schools reopened for targeted in-person supports. Many of our students and staff members were excited to return to campus. All of our schools had multiple safety measures in place in order to help ensure a safe reopening. We ended the month with the news that each of our five high schools made the U.S. News & World Report’s “Best High Schools” rankings!
MAY 2021

In May, our schools focused on testing and closing out the school year. We had previously announced the possibility of in-person graduation ceremonies, and due to the decreasing Covid case counts, we were able to move forward with those plans. Our seniors continued solidifying their post-high plans and our schools celebrated all students with virtual awards ceremonies.
Congratulations to PUC’s graduating classes of 2021! This year was one that was unlike any other. We are so glad that we got to close the year by seeing our graduates and their families in person for graduation.

Our PUC students and staff members all worked exceptionally hard to make it to the finish line. Congratulations, again, to our graduates and families! We are proud of you all and we thank you for your support!

To help celebrate PUC’s graduating classes of 2021, we created graduation showcase websites for each of our schools, where you can find videos, lists of graduates, award winners, parent & staff dedications to graduates, & more!

Click the following link to access the websites: https://bit.ly/puc-grads-21
2021 Graduation Photos

For more photos like the ones below, please visit our graduation showcase websites. You can find the links to those websites here: https://bit.ly/puc-grads-21.
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FOR SALE

PUC Polo Shirts - $20

PUC Laptop Bag - $40

Items can be purchased throughout the year.

Please contact Human Resources at hr@pucschools.org to place an order.

Please be sure to indicate your shirt size. Polos are available in both men's and women's sizes.