

Hello TSD Community,

As I settle into my first official week on the job, I want to formally introduce myself and thank all of you that have provided such a warm welcome so far. I cannot say enough how thrilled I am to be here as the new Superintendent of the Telluride School District. I know that I am in for a challenge, but want to assure you that I am up for it. I left Telluride at the end of February excited for the year ahead, little realizing how the world would be turned upside down a few short weeks later. My experience in Vermont over the past four months has been very similar to the experience here in San Miguel County, and I have learned much (as I know all of you have). In the free moments I had, I watched how everyone at TSD took an impossible situation and made it not only possible but as successful as could be expected. While that happened across the country in different ways and with varying success, I took special pride in seeing how it happened here. Similarly, I have been impressed and excited by the work of the TSD Design Team during the month of June as they have taken our reality, with all of its unknowns, and laid the groundwork for the best possible student experience this coming school year, regardless of the modality of instruction. Even if things went back to what used to be “full normal” (and I wouldn’t count on that), the great work done by the Design Team will translate to better student outcomes.

I know that many parents, students, community members, and staff have lots of questions and concerns about the logistics related to what school will look like in August. The TSD administration has been working hard on this, and we will be issuing an overview very soon and then following up with details as they continue to develop. We will be surveying parents to help shape our planning of logistics, and will also use much of the TSD Design Team work that overlaps with the nuts and bolts of running our schools. The safety and well-being of our students and staff is our highest priority. While we know that what is best for students is to be face to face with their teachers and peers, we also know that must absolutely be balanced with the dangers COVID presents. As we have learned over the past four months, we will all need to be flexible and patient as we move forward and figure this out together. One thing is for sure, we will be much better prepared in August than we were in March, and we will continue to do everything we can to support students, families, staff, and our community.

I am including a link to my 100 Day Entry Plan from February (<https://tinyurl.com/ybo4gsb2>). While so much has changed since February, and one might be tempted to throw this plan out the window given our new reality, I am sharing it so you can see what I will strive to do in spite of our current challenge. We will always have challenges, but my job as Superintendent is to keep our school system on a course moving forward to be the best we can be, and I have the utmost confidence that together we can make that happen.

I have been in town just over a week and feel quite settled in. I already love my house, my neighborhood, my town, my office, and my job. This is so much because of the people around me (although the mountain scenery helps). I am humbled and honored to have this opportunity, and will do everything necessary to support the Telluride schools and community as the Superintendent.

With gratitude,  
John Pandolfo  
Superintendent Telluride Schools