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April 25, 2022

All-bany Swims Project Update to the Council

As presented to the Council on May 17, 2021, the **All-bany Swims** pilot program is an effort to teach children to swim. By targeting primary grades with a comprehensive program, AUSD hopes to improve water safety and fitness in children that are most at-risk for drowning. COA would sponsor a free set of swim lessons for low socioeconomic level students (those qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch).

The District expresses tremendous gratitude to the City for their support of this proposal last spring. Both City and District acknowledge the need for children to learn to swim for their life-long safety, and AUSD remains committed to the long-term success of this program. However, the District must report that a year of continuing difficulties related to the COVID-19 pandemic, (as well as unrelated issues), have kept us from being able to launch the program.

The **All-bany Swims** program is a pilot effort and relies on the Albany Aquatic Center (owned and operated by AUSD) to run swim lessons. The Aquatic Center closed in March 2020, and has not been able to provide swim lessons since that time. When AUSD proposed this program to the Council, there was the expectation that the pool would be able to restart swimming lessons sometime during the 2021–22 school year. The Delta and Omicron COVID-19 waves took the entire attention of the District, and made it difficult to maintain even limited pool openings throughout the year. Mechanical issues have also resulted in closures.

We remain hopeful that swimming lessons will begin again in June. The new Aquatic Center Director begins on May 5th, and will continue the push to hire lifeguards and swim instructors for the summer. In the next few weeks, the District should be able to determine the size and extent of the swim lesson program that will be available this summer. If feasible, we will then distribute vouchers to the parents of eligible students for the summer session. Before the end of the fiscal year, we will update the City on the launch.

We would also like to report back to the Council via email in the fall on the progress of this initiative, as we move forward out of the pandemic. AUSD hopes that the Council will consider a roll-over of funds to continue to support the launch of **Albany Swims** for the 2022–23 school year.