



SANTA MONICA - MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

November 28, 2018

## **Message from Superintendent Dr. Ben Drati: Malibu Fire Update - School Status, Cleaning and Testing Update**

Dear parents and staff,

I had the opportunity to meet with a group of about 25 parent leaders, staff, teachers and community members from Malibu Monday evening to discuss our school reopening plans and concerns about air quality, hazardous materials, testing and the continuing education of Malibu students.

Our schools are a safe and comforting place for our students and we are working hard to open our doors to help families and staff return to a sense of normalcy and be part of the healing and recovery process.

We understand that some families are anxious to go back to school right away and some would like to wait longer and consider distance learning or independent study opportunities. Many have major decisions to make regarding temporary or permanent residences that include proximity to your current school.

We understand that some families and staff have elevated concerns regarding toxins and fine particulates in the air as a result of the fire, and the potential for pollution near our schools caused by ongoing clean up by homeowners.

All schools are undergoing thorough professional cleaning as previously outlined, with Webster now complete and reopened today. We have listened to parents and staff and have decided to delay the opening of Juan Cabrillo and Malibu High School until after the results of PCB testing are available and public. Lack of permanent power contributed to delays at all schools, except Webster. With that in mind, here are our current projected opening dates for students:

Webster - Wednesday, Nov. 28  
Point Dume - Tuesday, Dec. 4  
Juan Cabrillo - Monday, Dec. 10  
Malibu High - Tuesday, Dec. 11

Our certified industrial hygienist is advising us on the installation of additional air quality monitors near our schools. This will provide us with real-time alerts regarding shifts in air quality. We are committed to vigilance for our students and staff. We are also exploring renting inside air monitors to position at points throughout each campus.

We are exploring the installation of HEPA or carbon filters at our schools, or in case of classrooms and office spaces without HVAC systems, portable filtration units.

It is of extreme importance to us to meet the standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) to ensure the health of our staff and students prior to the reopening of each school. This week, the



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SCAQMD has indicated that Malibu air quality is “good” and has ceased from their event-specific monitoring for Malibu.

Parents, including some who attended our meeting Monday, have expressed varying levels of additional concerns around the air quality outside. We can control the air quality in our indoor spaces; however, outdoor air quality is under scrutiny. The district is working with local agencies to add air quality sensors near all of our schools for more accurate data as the clean-up continues in the community.

The district will also work with the City of Malibu to request notifications of debris removal in nearby areas that may compromise the quality of outside air near our schools, so we may make decisions protective of student and staff health.

With regard to options prior to each school reopening, we have multiple:

1. **Supervision for grades K-12 at Webster** starting Nov. 28 until Point Dume and Cabrillo reopen. Please submit this [form](#) to let our staff know your student plans to attend. Lunch will be provided to students who are checked in by 9:30 am.
2. **Supervision continues** at Olympic High School for Malibu students preschool-12<sup>th</sup> grade for the week through the week of Dec. 3rd. Please submit this [form](#) to let our staff know if your student plans to attend. Lunch will be provided to students who are checked in by 9:30 am. We know some of our families are temporarily living in Santa Monica, so this is a closer option for you at this time.
3. **Malibu Boys & Girls Clubs** are reopening as our schools reopen. Webster Club can take additional students, including Seaside Preschool students from Cabrillo as well as TK and K from Cabrillo, Point Dume and MHS. Please check with them so they know who to plan for: [www.bgcmalibu.org](http://www.bgcmalibu.org).
4. If you are displaced and unable to inhabit your home, you may stay enrolled and continue to attend your home school of residence, even if you temporarily relocated outside of SMMUSD district boundaries. You may also enroll your student in another school that has room within SMMUSD or another district, under the **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**. (This is not available to families who are not displaced or looking to enroll students elsewhere for just a few days prior to your home school reopening.)
5. Distance learning and independent study is available for families who are displaced and want to consider other options; these options may be helpful for families who intend to return to their home schools, but who need extra time to return to school. Please check with your school principal for options or follow up if the principal sends out interest surveys.

We understand that high school juniors and seniors are concerned about grades and how this might impact their college applications. We want to let you know that your teachers, site administrators and counselors are available to you as we navigate this challenging time together. Your school family is here to help and support you. Please contact your school site if you have questions.

Our teachers are working on extending a high degree of flexibility with respect to assignment due dates; adjusting scheduled classroom assessments and ensuring that grades are reflective of the situation our community is experiencing. In addition, our secondary teachers are exploring



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various ways to provide students differentiated opportunities to demonstrate their learning and are collaborating to identify essential learnings and adjust the pacing of our instructional program, including AP classes.

While schools are closed, we recommend that our students continue reading their favorite books. In addition, we encourage them to journal as a means by which to express their feelings and thoughts. Students can also explore the various supplemental resources offered through Khan Academy to support their learning: <https://www.khanacademy.org>.

Students returning to school can expect a warm and welcoming environment with activities and opportunities to share stories, hug a therapy dog and express themselves through writing and art. Each school is approaching the return as best suits the culture and grade range at the school, but all are heavily focused on the needs of students during this time. Some potential activities include: community building assemblies, classroom circles and other resources to be available to our students as they return. Some students will have tremendous stress from this tragedy and others will carry forward as if nothing has occurred. Our teachers and staff are equipped to work with each student and provide support accordingly. We continue to update our [resources](#) for parents and students and this is also available by contacting your school site. The City of Malibu has created a [Malibu Disaster Assistance Center](#) webpage.

Malibu High School athletic teams continue to meet and practice offsite. Sports seasons will stay on track and student athletes will be prepared to compete. Schools outside of Malibu, along with Samohi, have welcomed us for practice. Please contact your coach for additional information regarding your student athlete.

The professional cleaning underway at our schools right now is extremely detailed. We have watched crews working from ceiling to walls to floors and all spaces in between, thoroughly cleaning classrooms, offices and other indoor spaces. In areas with high ceilings, such as gyms and auditoriums, scissor lifts are used to access every nook and cranny to clean. Outside areas are getting the full treatment, too. At Malibu High School this week, more than 150 cleaning professionals are scouring the campus from the top down.

We are working with a certified professional cleaning company, experienced in cleaning and restoration, along with environmental specialists, industrial hygienists and other experts, to ensure our schools are safe for students and staff upon reopening.

We are conducting air quality testing prior to the restart of school for lead, asbestos, fine particulates and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). For those interested in more details, please see the [Scope of Work](#) for cleaning and evaluating the environmental safety of the Malibu school sites.

All testing reports will be posted to the school websites as they become available. Look for the "Environmental Reports" button on your school website.

We continue our Best Management Practices cleaning protocol at all schools, which outline cleaning practices daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually.



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Please let us know your **plans for return** when our schools reopen by submitting this [survey](#), if you have not yet done so. One survey per student, please. This will help us best determine needs for returning students and staff.

**Bus needs:** If you plan to return to your home school, but are residing in Santa Monica, Pacific Palisades or Malibu, please indicate on the survey link above whether you would like district busing to Malibu, if available. Please provide your new address (if applicable) for our Transportation Department.

For **students with disabilities** in our Malibu schools, district and school site teams are collaborating to plan supports that can be provided in the interim and when students return to school.

**Rain forecasted:** We are monitoring rain in collaboration with the City of Malibu through this expected rain event tonight and tomorrow and will be in contact with parents and staff if this impacts Webster, now that it is open. The safety of our students and staff is our top priority.

We have received an outpouring of support from our SMMUSD community. The Boys and Girls Club of Malibu is currently coordinating monetary and material donations to Malibu families in need. You can donate at [www.bgcmalibu.org](http://www.bgcmalibu.org). The Santa Monica College Foundation has also set up a [Malibu Fire Relief](#) website to support SMMUSD families and staff. PTA groups in Santa Monica have been collecting items and donations and are supporting welcome back parent gatherings. The California Teachers Association has set up a [SMMCTA Go Fund Me](#) page specific for our teachers who lost homes.

We encourage you to follow us on Twitter @MalibuPathways and the Malibu Schools Pathway [Facebook](#) page, download our Santa Monica-Malibu USD mobile app and sign up for [City of Malibu alerts](#) for roads and community conditions. Follow #MalibuStrong.

We have created a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page that we will update as needed in the coming weeks that may answer additional questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati  
Superintendent