



SANTA MONICA - MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

March 26, 2020

## Superintendent's Message: Distance Learning and School Closures

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

I hope that you and your loved ones are safe, healthy, and weathering this crisis as well as possible under these circumstances.

With regard to the status of school closures, we are following directives of Governor Newsom, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH) and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). **We will remain closed until further notice, with distance learning continuing.** We had originally stated that we would be closed until April 20<sup>th</sup>, but this is likely not possible. We will monitor the status of the situation carefully and will reopen as directed by Governor Newsom, LACDPH and LACOE.

We realize how much of a burden and stress school closures have on the daily lives of our families and staff. We will continue to improve on the delivery of distance learning so that the education of our students continues as effectively as possible given the circumstances. We are now in our second week of distance learning and I am proud to see our staff work collaboratively and diligently to engage with students and parents via phone, email, and learning software; helping our students stay connected, feel cared for and continue with important learning. Our classified staff continues to work in preparing breakfast and lunch for families needing food, assisting with enrollment and other office duties, and our custodial staff are continuing to prep the facilities for the safe return of our students and staff.

We appreciate their hard work, effort, and positive attitudes of all staff, as we adjust to this situation with the best interests of all students in mind.

We have entered uncharted territory with distance learning, but we are tackling this head on with intention and the goal of favorable student outcomes. We plan to deploy digital devices and wifi connectivity to all students who may need it. Ensuring that all of our students have a device enhances our staff's ability to deliver curriculum more effectively. If your student needs a device for home use, please notify your school, or take the survey that applies: TK-5 students: <https://bit.ly/3dhjlrF>, and 6-12 students: <http://bit.ly/2w6xN4z>. We are planning our device deployment for next week. All families indicating they need a device or connectivity will be notified.

Our dedicated educational services team, under the leadership of Dr. Jacqueline Mora, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services, along with her directors, coordinators and staff, have created a Frequently Asked Questions document that will explain our plans, and answer questions relative to distance learning, various testing including SATs and ACTs, grading, expectations, graduation and other school-related activities that have been put on hold or cancelled.

English: <https://bit.ly/3ajw2jD>

Spanish: <https://bit.ly/2QHQB2>



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We have launched a new [Family Resources](#) website that contains instructional materials by grade span in all core subjects that will continue to be updated with additional resources and materials to support parents who are supporting students at home during this extended closure. Visit the Distance Learning, Instructional Resources or Community Resource pages for important and helpful information. Distance learning will pause during Spring Break, April 4-19, and resume on April 20<sup>th</sup>.

Our district leadership, along with principals continue to meet through Zoom conferencing multiple times per week to discuss delivery of instruction remotely and other issues that arise. In addition, our principals are meeting with their staff to discuss our current distance learning implementation and make adjustments as needed.

The great work of SMMUSD continues -- it just looks a little different during this time. Thank you to our principals who are inspiring our families and staff, while displaying creativity and extraordinary concern for the wellbeing of our students and staff.

Please, if you have not taken the survey regarding the need for a student device at home, please let your teacher or administrator know so we may ensure continuity of learning for all students. It is our intent to provide a device to students who are in need and ask for your support in this endeavor.

We are continuing our meal service between 8-10 a.m., Monday through Friday at four school sites. [Meal service info.](#)

This is a very challenging time for all of us as parents, teachers, district staff, administrators and community members. We have our elderly relatives to worry about, we are caring for our children at home, while many of us, including our teachers, are working from home. We understand that some of our SMMUSD families are facing challenging employment situations and business slowdowns that are impacting people financially and emotionally.

We published a community and mental health resources guide last week that may be helpful to you and your loved ones: English: <https://bit.ly/2Qu2xn8> Spanish: <https://bit.ly/3bdqQO7>. Our district nursing team continues to provide guidance for stopping the spread, staying home and keeping healthy.

Be safe out in the community and take care of one another.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent