



SANTA MONICA - MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

March 11, 2021

**Superintendent's Message:**  
**TK-5 Hybrid Beginning Week of April 12**  
***On-Campus Orientation Experience Weeks of March 15 and March 22***

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff and Community Members,

I am pleased to announce that the district is moving toward hybrid models of instruction following spring break for our elementary schools, TK-5. We are in agreement with our teachers' union and will first move to on-campus experiences the week of March 15, then ramp up following spring break, the week of April 12. We enthusiastically look forward to meeting our elementary students in person next week.

Elementary principals have developed hybrid plans for maximum return to campuses after spring break. Principals at each school will share the plans for their site directly with their families. Based on school site needs, campus size, staffing and other factors, the hybrid models will include a minimum of 10 hours per week of on-campus instruction and activities. Our schools will be implementing one of the following hybrid models:

1. **AM/PM model:** Each class will be divided to reduce class size to maintain physical distancing, one group coming to school in the morning for approximately 2.5 hours with distance learning in the afternoon, and one group coming to school in the afternoon with distance learning in the morning. This provides an opportunity for approximately 2.5 hours a day, four days a week of on-campus offerings (four time blocks, totaling 10 hours a week). One day will consist of two hours of synchronous distance learning for all students while schools receive thorough cleanings. Check with your school.
1. **PM model:** Students will return in-person to school in the afternoon for approximately 2.5 hours a day, four days a week. Distance learning will continue to be provided to all students in the morning, whether those students elect to attend in-person in the afternoons or not. This provides an opportunity for approximately 2.5 hours a day, four days a week of on-campus offerings (four time blocks, totaling 10 hours a week). Wednesdays will consist of two hours of synchronous distance learning for all students while schools receive thorough cleanings.
2. **Split week model:** Each group as defined by the school will participate in on-campus learning experiences two full days a week from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. While on campus,

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www.smmusd.org **Board of Education:** Keith Coleman • Craig Foster • Jon Kean • Maria Leon-Vazquez  
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**Superintendent:** Dr. Ben Drati

classes will be divided to reduce class size to maintain required physical distancing. On the three days that students are not on campus, students will participate in distance learning. This model provides an opportunity for approximately 5 hours a day, two days a week of on-campus offerings (two days at 5 hours each, totaling 10 hours a week). Note: One of the DL days may be a minimum day, with thorough cleaning taking place. Check with your school.

### **Survey: return to school or continued distance learning**

Parents of elementary students will or have received a short survey regarding their interest in having their child return to school or if their child will continue with distance learning. We understand that some families may prefer to have their child stay in distance learning for the remainder of the school year. We will do our best to keep elementary students with their current teacher, however, this will be based on our ability to match the staffing needs at the site as well as staffing needs for distance learning. This is a challenge for any hybrid model, and administration and teachers will be working together to achieve this goal to the fullest extent possible. We recognize the interest of parents and students to stay connected to their current teacher and classmates.

### **On-campus orientation experience**

For the on-campus orientation experiences the weeks of March 15 and March 22, students and teachers will have the opportunity to participate in wellbeing and social emotional activities to acclimate or attend school for the first time, one time each of these two weeks. This allows for students to come back on campus, learn about routines and practice new procedures and protocols. Safety protocols are in place, including a wellness screening tool. Your principal will provide you with information to access this tool prior to student arrival.

### **Safety protocols and facility readiness**

Our required safety plan was submitted on March 1 to our guiding agencies. Our detailed [safety plan](#) guiding our reopening is posted online along with our [school guidance checklist](#). We are in the process of translating these documents into Spanish and will post when complete.

We are optimizing clean air at all schools. Here is a [detailed memo](#) from Carey Upton, Chief Operations Officer, that details our clean air optimization systems installed in classrooms, offices and all indoor spaces. Our schools are taking advantage of our nice coastal weather and are preparing for indoor and outdoor learning. We are finalizing plans to have our staff tested for Covid-19 on a scheduled basis. We will have more information regarding testing soon.

We have begun to share photos of our facility readiness and some of our schools have posted short video messages for their families. Here are some sample [photo collages](#) that provide a visual of safety improvements on our campuses.

### **What comes next?**

We have approached a very exciting turning point, not only in the course of this pandemic in Los Angeles County, but with regard to the opportunity to reopen all grades in all schools for in-person learning for those families who are comfortable. For the first time since the State of California established the Blueprint for a Safer Economy framework last August, LA County is poised to move from the most restrictive purple tier and enter the red tier.

Barring something unexpected to prevent tier reassignment, health officials believe we will advance to the red tier no later than Wednesday, March 17, at which time the State will permit all schools to reopen for grades TK–12, as long as the school complies with all safety requirements in State guidance and County protocols.

Our district is currently working with staff to enable the physically distanced return of secondary schools in a form of hybrid instruction. This may be a departure from the distance learning plus model that was originally negotiated. We have prioritized our negotiations, given the accelerated time frame and exciting news of entering the red tier very soon. Secondary principals will be providing more information soon.

Please continue to take care of yourselves and each other.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent