



SANTA MONICA - MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

April 3, 2020

Superintendent's Pre-Spring Break Update

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

I hope this communication finds you and your family safe and in good health. As the proud superintendent of a fantastic school district, I understand how heartbreaking our announcement of continuing distance learning for the remainder of the school year can be for our students and families. As a father of three, including a high school senior, I can relate to the impact these school closures have on all of us. Please know, our district is committed to providing ongoing education, resources and support, to students, parents and staff.

Distance Learning

We have moved to distance learning following direction by Governor Gavin Newsom, State Superintendent of Schools, Tony Thurmond, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education Superintendent, Dr. Debra Duardo. Our physical buildings are closed, but teaching and student learning continues. Upon our return from spring break, we will provide a more standardized learning plan for students in grade spans. An outline of expectations for students and teachers from your individual schools will be provided by your school's principal. We will continue to share resources and support for parents as you assist with your children's education.

Distance learning will not continue during spring break. When we return on April 20th, our teachers and staff will continue to provide ongoing education via distance learning opportunities through four key online platforms that we will describe in our next letter. Additionally, as we all become more familiar and proficient with distance learning (e.g. pace of assignments, schedules, feedback tools, depth of curriculum, etc.) the efficacy of this approach will improve and evolve.

We want to remind you that distance learning is not a minute-for-minute replacement of the school day; rather, it is an altered and abbreviated schedule that reflects the reality of our current situation. Our teachers and administrators are working extremely hard to adjust lessons and utilize new delivery methods so your student(s) may continue to be engaged, enthused and learning. Our team continues to be flexible, creative and understanding as they become more proficient in digital platforms and engaging students remotely. We are discussing attendance and engagement expectations and will share these with you in a future communication.

The delivery of remote learning is going to look different between elementary and secondary, and may look different between schools and teachers. There will be commonality and guidelines, but room for flexibility and variation between grade spans.

To support our teachers in the development of lessons that incorporate the various online platforms, we have provided two student work days where students will work independently while our teachers plan collaboratively. Your principal will communicate the dates for your school.

Technology Access

This week, our schools distributed more than 850 Chromebooks to students whose families



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requested access to technology devices for distance learning. We are continuing to provide Chromebooks to our students on an as-needed basis. Please contact your teacher or administrator if your student needs use of a device for distance learning or complete this form: <https://bit.ly/SMM0420>. We understand that families who have devices may be strained to share between students and parents working from home, and we will also accommodate devices under this circumstance. We are working on obtaining hotspots for families unable to secure internet service and we have listed offers of free internet service on our [community resource](#) website.

Distance Learning / Family Resources Online Hub: www.smmusd.org/familyresources

Grades and Graduation Requirements

We continue to have discussions regarding grades and graduation requirements and we recognize the importance of these topics for our students and families. The California State Department of Education and the State Board of Education has issued guidance regarding grading on April 1st. The guidance included many different possible options. The school board, district leadership, high school principals and teachers, will review the information and determine how best to implement it for our students. We will share with our staff, parents and students as soon as possible.

We understand that many families are exploring post-secondary opportunities throughout the country and world and we will take these into consideration during our discussions.

UC/CSU Admissions Requirement Adjustments

The UC Office of the President [announced measures](#) to relax undergraduate admissions requirements to “mitigate some of the extraordinary challenges students and their families face.” Additionally, the CSU released its amended [admissions policies and practices](#), providing an overview of key changes based on student grade levels.

End-of-Year Activities

One of the most difficult aspects of the closure is the disruption to traditional end-of-year activities for our students, including proms, school matriculation and high school graduation ceremonies. Santa Monica, Malibu and Olympic High Schools, are determined to provide an in-person graduation at some time, which may be during or after the summer, depending on when large groups may gather again. Over the coming days and weeks, schools will explore alternative ways to celebrate the end of the year and ways to recognize our students for their accomplishments.

Summer School

At this time, we are continuing to plan for summer school for elementary and middle school students, Extended School Year (ESY) for designated students with an IEP, and Get-Ahead and Credit Recovery classes for high school. The delivery method, whether in-person or distance learning, is not yet determined given the evolving nature of COVID-19 and the Ed Services team is preparing for either option. We continue to monitor and seek guidance from state and local officials regarding the recommended safety precautions for all community members. If you received an invitation to summer school please mail your applications to the district office by April 24th. More details will be forthcoming, which will reflect the evolving COVID-19 situation.



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Meal Service Program

The district continues to provide breakfast and lunch grab-and-go meals for students on weekdays from 8-10 a.m., including during spring break, except for two holiday dates: April 10 and 13.

Community Resources

Our community resources list includes other organizations providing food, resources and mental health services for our families. [English](#) / [Spanish](#).

Enrollment for 2020-21, Permits and Continuing Enrollment Verification

Preschool, transitional kindergarten, and K-12 enrollment for the 2020-21 school year is in process remotely. Please contact your neighborhood school via email for specific information. Intradistrict and interdistrict permit applications are now available online. Families on interdistrict permits should submit the verification of continuing enrollment form and mail to the district office. All [enrollment and permit information](#) is available online.

Facility Improvement Projects

You will continue to see progress being made on our bond-funded construction projects. Public works construction is deemed an essential service. Contractors are integrating social distancing. Workers do not congregate or have close contact while working. Anyone who feels ill is not permitted on site. We have eliminated in-person meetings. While taking precautions, we are continuing to build the facilities our students need.

Census2020

County Superintendent Dr. Debra Duardo reminds us why it is now more important than ever that we count everybody in L.A. County. The Census helps determine critical funds that we need for education, health services, transportation and many other areas. It's easy to do, so stand and be counted! Video from Dr. Duardo: in [English](#) (1½ min). Watch in [Spanish](#) (1½ min). Please take a few minutes and complete the Census online, if you have not yet done so: www.CaliforniaCensus.org.

Spring Break: April 4-19, 2020

We hope that all families, teachers, staff and administrators can take the coming two weeks to relax and refresh as much as possible, while adhering to the "Safer at Home" order. Please understand that our team will not be responding to emails or inquiries during the break, and will return ready to educate students and support families as we continue to navigate this challenging time.

Final Notes . . .

We understand that the decision to physically close our schools for the remainder of the year will result in new questions and concerns regarding the next few months of distance learning and the previously scheduled end-of-year activities. My leadership team continues to heed guidance from state officials, feedback from stakeholders, and consultation with experts to formulate next steps with the best interests of our students, and staff in mind. Families may continue to utilize the Let's Talk feature on our website, or contact your teacher, administrator, or secondary school counselor.

We have quickly transitioned into a new way of teaching and learning that reflects the health and safety impacts of COVID-19. I am proud of our teachers and administrators for adapting to



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this new method effectively from the start. As previously expressed, yet worth repeating, we are grateful for our parent and community partnerships during these challenges and changes. We look forward to the ongoing collaboration centered on the best outcomes for students.

For the most up-to-date list of resources, information and health guidance, please continue to visit: www.smmusd.org/coronavirus.

Please be healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent