



SANTA MONICA - MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

July 14, 2020

Superintendent's Message: SMMUSD to reopen to full distance learning model this fall

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District staff will recommend that the School Board announce a plan to reopen with distance learning, following recent state and local health recommendations and a surge in Covid-19 cases in Los Angeles County. Staff will recommend that we adopt Model C as previously described in materials and recent town hall meetings, which can be found online: www.smmusd.org/School2020-21. SMMUSD administration, teachers and classified staff plan to work to make distance learning as positive and engaging an experience as possible.

SMMUSD staff want to reopen in-person as soon as possible and had been preparing to recommend an in-person option (Model B, the hybrid model that includes both in-person and distance learning). However, the steady upsurge in coronavirus cases in our region over the past several weeks combined with the advice of public health experts has led us to the conclusion that distance learning is the most prudent model to start the 2020-2021 school year.

The school board will discuss and take action on the distance learning plan at its regular July 16, 2020 school board meeting. The agenda is posted [online](#). The presentation and results of the recent staff and parent surveys are posted as attachments to the agenda item.

This was not an easy decision. As we continuously reviewed guidelines and recommendations from the state, county health officials, Los Angeles County Office of Education, and considered the recent surge in cases and hospitalizations in LA County, we changed our approach and direction this week from hybrid to distance learning. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health released these school reopening [protocols](#) on July 13, 2020.

Since late spring, the district has worked toward the reopening of our physical buildings on our campuses following all guidelines and protocols presented by the agencies mentioned above. While we are making progress, this is a big undertaking that requires additional time, considerations and material purchases, to ensure we are the most protective of student and staff health while on campus. Reopening with distance learning provides us the opportunity to fully implement these recommendations and prepare for the return of students and staff as quickly and safely as possible, once it is safe to do so.

We understand that distance learning may present a challenge to many families. We will address these concerns in the upcoming school board meeting and during the next month and beyond, along with how we plan to deliver distance learning to our students in a consistent and effective manner.

We plan a follow up letter on Friday following the school board's final decision.

Thank you and please continue to take care of one another.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent