



SANTA MONICA - MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

February 8, 2021

## **Superintendent's Message: Fall Planning and Spring Update**

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff and Community Members,

As the devastating impacts of COVID-19 seem to be reduced in recent weeks, SMMUSD is receiving many questions about the rest of the 2020-21 school year and our plans for fall.

### **Our plans for the 2021- 22 school year**

Our district is currently planning for the 2021-22 school year with the expectation that our students will be back on campus learning in-person to the greatest extent possible. We say this with the understanding that unforeseen events have altered our plans in the past. However, we are committed to in-person instruction as our priority for the fall.

Our planning for the 2021-22 school year assumes that the following will occur prior to the start of school in August:

1. At a minimum, we expect all staff to be vaccinated by the end of summer (most likely much earlier).
2. According to statements from the federal government, portions of the student body may be vaccinated by fall. (Currently, none of the available vaccines are approved for students under age 16. Additionally, the science continues to develop with respect to transmissibility among students of different ages.)
3. The COVID-19 case rate and positivity rates will most likely put LA County into the red tier, or even a less restrictive tier, allowing schools to ramp up in-person programs.

The opening of schools in the fall for in-person experiences/instruction will be a logical extension/culmination of our ever-expanding distance learning plus model which will begin in all schools once infection rates meet the threshold for a safe rollout.

### **Our current plan: Progress toward “plus” in distance learning plus**

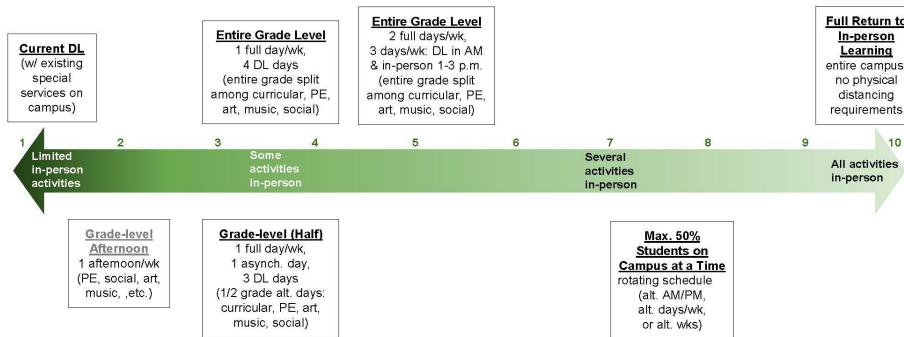
In the past three weeks, principals have been working with their staff and parent representatives/groups to develop structures and schedules for distance learning plus activities and instruction. I'm pleased with the progress they are making. I have seen different variations of plus activities with students on campus once or more per week.

I will be meeting with parent representatives (PTA and school site council) and staff representatives (faculty advisory council and site leadership team) from each site this week in two meetings, one for elementary and one for secondary. The goal of these efforts is to establish agreement with our bargaining units in the following two weeks.

We are working on a linear scale from 1-10 that will reflect the different and varying levels of in-person activities as we make our way from the current distance learning model with limited campus services, all the way to full reopening as we knew before the pandemic. My report to the school board at the February 4 meeting demonstrated how we may honor the different and varying degrees of distance plus schedules being proposed. This scale reflects how we can continue to ramp up in-person instructions and activities now continuing into the fall and through

the day we can reopen as we previously experienced pre-pandemic. Here is a draft of the scale we are developing that I shared at the board meeting for elementary school options:

### Elem. School Options: Degree of In-person Activities



We are confident that the distance learning plus model will provide our students with in-person experiences both academic and social-emotional with the flexibility to adapt easily to the unpredictable health crisis we are all navigating right now. Distance learning plus has started with limited services and will expand as the health environment improves, providing a model with the least disruption and student engagement.

Please stay connected to your school communications and we will continue to update you as our planning continues.

Sincerely,  
 Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent

**Read here for a LA County Health Department update:**

As I have previously noted, Governor Newsom proposed a plan for returning Tk-6 (TK-5 in our case) students back on campus with new and different case rate metrics than prior state metrics. The plan was scheduled for legislative approval this week, but the plan did not pass. The new case rate proposed in his plan was for districts to be allowed to open when the county case rate drops to 25/100,000. LA County is currently at 38/100,000.

We learned last week that in spite of the legislative rejection the state will maintain that TK-5 students can return for in-person instruction using the 25/100,000 threshold metrics proposed in Newsom’s plan. We will be submitting our safety plan outlining how we will adhere to the safety protocols established by the state and county health department. Our safety plan describes in-person instruction and activities within the distance learning plus model.

**Vaccinations**

Education staff is scheduled for Phase 1B under the state’s priority for vaccines. The county is currently finalizing Phase 1A3. This group does include our nurses, health aides, and special education staff who need to be close to students for health purposes such as speech pathologists, and other staff. And I’m happy to report that most, if not all, have received their first and, in some cases, second round of vaccines. We are being told that Phase 1B will start within the next two to three weeks.

We are finalizing plans with St. John’s Medical Center, to offer vaccination clinics for our staff when Phase 1B is initiated. We are very appreciative of this partnership with a local health care provider.

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