

August 13, 2020

Dear SMUSD Colleagues, Parents, and Students,

As we launch our 138th academic school year, the COVID-19 era continues to be unlike any other we have experienced in our storied history. Together, we are forging ahead to ensure we support our students, each other, and our community. I express my sincerest appreciation for your flexibility and support as we welcome back our students and launch a new academic year via remote instruction. The success of each and every one of our students remains our true North Star! We, Team SMUSD, all 2400 strong, will continue to wrap our collective arms around our 21,000 students in a supportive and engaging virtual environment.

Below, please find important updates for the new academic school year:

First 2-weeks of School

Our first day of school is Tuesday, August 18th. The first two weeks of instruction (August 18th through August 28th) will be short days allowing students, teachers, and staff members opportunities to make meaningful connections with one another, establish routines, and become comfortable navigating our educational platforms. Our teachers and staff will continue to work in their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for lesson planning and curriculum development.

The first two weeks of school will follow the schedule below:

August 18th - August 28th		
Elementary School	Middle School	High School
8:30am - 10:10am	8:30am - 10:10am	8:30am - 10:45am
Mid-morning & afternoon will be for teacher PLC work, lesson planning, curriculum work, professional development	Mid-morning & afternoon will be for teacher PLC work, lesson planning, curriculum work, professional development	Mid-morning & afternoon will be for teacher PLC work, lesson planning, curriculum work, professional development

More information is forthcoming regarding the regular bell schedule for August 31st and beyond pending the conclusion of our ongoing collaboration with our labor partners.

Leading Edge Virtual School (LEVS)

For the 2020-2021 school year, we have established LEVS as a year-long virtual program. We have made a few adjustments that will allow the program to coexist within each of our schools ensuring students, parents and staff continue to remain connected to their home school communities. Since this pathway will be a yearlong virtual program within each school for this year, LEVS students will be cohorted with students and a teacher from their home school. Students will also be able to partake in all school-based activities, including co-curricular and extracurricular classes and clubs.

The core academics are the foundation of our educational pathways. Students in the year-long virtual program will also have the opportunity to participate in self-directed learning. For example, elementary school students will participate in *Genius Hour* during the in-school enrichment block working independently or collaboratively with peers to research and

create passion projects based on areas of interests. Students will also be able to explore their curiosity and creativity through district provided enrichment menus offering students the opportunity to select activities based on individual interests, participate in independent maker and design challenges as well as in after school career-technical education (CTE) clubs to explore career paths, among others.

Secondary students will be enrolled in cohorted advisory classes, create academic portfolios where students will artifact evidence of their learning, participate in problem-based, project-centered instruction that allows students to engage and investigate real world issues; student mentorship/internships will provide opportunities to engage in collaborative partnerships with elementary students during *Genius Hour*.

As we phase in our LEVS yearlong virtual program within each school, we will continue to provide ongoing professional development opportunities that will be made available for all (LEVS and Remote In-Person) teachers in the following areas: transforming instruction for the virtual setting, best practices for online learning, *Genius Hour* and Passion Projects, creation and use of academic portfolios, how to conduct mentor/mentee sessions, technology platforms, differentiation, culture building and collaboration, Professional Learning Communities, "How People Learn", interdisciplinary problem-based, project-centered instruction, among others.

Chromebook Distribution, IT Support, Internet Access

Our school sites have been distributing computer devices for our students. If you have not received your device yet, please refer to the following link for your school Chromebook distribution schedule: [Chromebook Distribution Schedule](#).

IT Support

In order to support our families with questions regarding their Chromebooks, SMUSD Educational Platforms, Zoom, and other Tech Tools, our Technology Department has created the following website: [Tech Tutorials For SMUSD Families](#). To view an orientation video for the website, please click here: [Tech Tutorials Website Orientation](#).

The website will also assist families with a menu of helpful videos with instructions for how to access these various platforms including Zoom, Google Classroom, iReady (TK-5 Math), Benchmark (TK-5 English Language Arts), Seesaw, Nearpod, FlipGrid, Paper, among others.

In addition, a Parent Tech Helpline (760.290.2598) will be open from 7:30am to 3:00pm, Monday through Friday, to help our families and students with Chromebook issues.

Internet Access

All families will need internet/WiFi at home to access our Remote Instruction. There are resources and programs available for families who qualify for the National School Lunch Program, Head Start, or SNAP. These programs include:

- Cox [Connect2Compete](#) ([first two month free, \\$9.95/month after](#))
- Spectrum [Internet Assist Program](#) (\$22.99 per month)
- AT&T [Internet](#) (\$10 per month)

If you are having trouble setting up services or need support, please contact your school administrator or office staff so that we may assist you.

School Lunches

Our food services staff is back and ready to serve our students! The District will return to its *Grab & Go* food delivery from 11 am to 1 pm at the following nine schools: Carrillo Elementary, Joli Ann Leichtag Elementary, La Mirada Academy, Richland Elementary, San Marcos Elementary, San Elijo Middle School, San Marcos Middle School, Mission Hills High School and San Marcos High School.

In addition, our Food Services team is joining forces with our Transportation team to bring meals to you! Our combined teams will have food available for pickup at 25 different locations throughout the District. More details on the locations will be forthcoming.

Kids on Campus (KOC)

Although under current California Department of Health Guidelines our KOC program is not permissible, we would like to gauge your interest if and when we are permitted to operate the program on our school sites. Please take a moment to complete the following survey: <https://forms.gle/QN8M5H52DJQQ3Fu7A> by August 21st.

We look forward to launching our 2020-2021 academic school year next week! We can't wait to welcome our students back virtually.

My best,
Dr. García
Superintendent