



SAN MATEO- FOSTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Update from Superintendent Rosas Friday, December 18, 2020

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Hello Everyone,

As I write to you as Winter Break begins, I find myself wishing for better news of COVID-19 in San Mateo County (SMC). Last night the stay-at-home order took effect for SMC due to the recent surge in cases and hospitalizations and the decline in ICU capacity. The news can feel disorienting as this stay-at-home order differs from the order of last spring. You can read the guidelines in this [press release](#) from SMC.



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District Reopening Plan - Accomplishments This Week

I wrote to you last Friday regarding the decision by the Board of Trustees in light of recent County COVID conditions which was that SMFCSD's reopening in the Hybrid Model for all elementary school students and middle school Special Day Classes (SDC) students will occur after SMC returns to the Red Tier. Additionally, the Board directed staff to continue to work on a Wednesday plan for middle school students and bring forth possible middle school Hybrid Models for Board consideration. Here are the links last week's *Superintendent Update* ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)).

The stay-at-home order now in effect does not impact our plans, and, over the course of the past week, we have continued preparations for implementing the Hybrid Model as soon as conditions permit:

- **COVID-19 Testing:** This week over 200 staff members participated in COVID-19 testing at the District Office and at sites with Learning Hubs in operation. Testing will continue in January.
- **Reopening Handbook:** We've completed our SMFCSD Reopening Health and Safety Handbook, 2020-2021 which documents District-wide COVID-19 guidance. (We will email it to you in a separate message as soon as the Spanish translation is complete.) This District Reopening Handbook will be followed by site-specific handbooks in January. We expect to update handbooks as new information becomes available; we recommend you use the links to the online copy to ensure you access the most current version.
- **Class Assignments:** Also, as promised, families of all elementary school students and middle school SDC should by now have received messages from principals or teachers providing class assignments for when campuses can reopen. I want to remind you that these will not take effect until we can safely return in the Hybrid model. Please check your email for those messages.

Board Meeting Update

Trustees Corzo, Warren and Watkins were ceremonially sworn in on Monday, December 14, 2020 beginning their four-year term on the School Board. Trustees Chin and Proctor continue their terms. The Board elected Trustee Chin as President and Trustee Proctor as Vice President of the Board. Additionally, the following appointments for Liaison positions were made by President Chin:

- Secretary of the Board - Dr. Rosas
- Legislative Representative - Trustee Chin
- San Mateo City Council - Trustees Chin and Watkins
- Foster City City Council - Trustees Chin and Proctor
- SMFC Education Foundation - Trustee Proctor
- PTA Coordinating Council - Trustee Chin



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- Special Education District Advisory Committee (SEDAC) - Trustees Corzo and Warren
- District English Language Advisory Council (DELAC) - Trustee Proctor
- Sanctuary Task Force - Trustees Corzo and Warren
- Equity Task Force - Trustees Corzo and Watkins
- Home Room Committee - Trustee Watkins
- Communications Committee - Trustee Chin
- Labor Management Initiative (LMI) - Trustees Proctor and Warren

Also at this meeting, the First Interim Budget report was approved for submission and shows a positive certification which means that the District is able to meet its financial obligations for this year and the two subsequent years.

Update on Essential Equity Work

Earlier this month on December 5, the Board held a Study Session, “Effective Governance with Equity Lens.” You may [view the video](#) recording. This month the Equity Task Force welcomed Rev. Marlyn Bussey and Teacher Jennifer Young to the Equity Task Force, filling the community member and certificated staff positions, respectively. In January, selected parent/guardian applicants will be invited for an interview.

Special Education Snippets

Today’s *Special Education Snippets* include a reminder to “Ask the SMFCSD School Psychologists.” Long periods of sheltering-in-place and uncertainty around the upcoming months may be taking their toll. SMFCSD is very lucky to have a team of dedicated school psychologists and mental health professionals within our schools. They have teamed-up and created a website, “[Ask the SMFCSD School Psychologist](#),” which offers an advice line for students experiencing developmental, mental health, and educational or behavioral challenges. Families may review generalized feedback from previous submissions, submit their own questions or review mental health resources. Questions will be answered by a panel of 1-3 practitioners.

The next meeting of the Special Education District Advisory Committee (SEDAC) is Tuesday, January 26, 2021, 7:00 pm via Zoom. To find login information for meetings, videos from previous meetings or to access resources, please go to the [SEDAC web page](#). If you have any questions about SEDAC, please contact Committee Chairperson Amy Fickenscher at acfickens@gmail.com.



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Experts Discuss COVID-19 and Reopening Schools

On November 30 the Belmont Redwood Shores School District hosted a panel of expert medical professionals who discussed school reopening in the era of COVID-19. I found it to be a very informative session and I share this [event recording](#) with you.

In addition, the County Office of Education is working with leaders in education, public health, science, medicine and research to put together a webinar series in 2021 aimed at creating a village of support for the students of San Mateo County. We'll share the announcement of the series with you as soon as we receive it.

And Now for Some Truly Wonderful News

Measure T - The Results Are In:

The election results have been certified and Measure T has passed. We are very thankful for the support of our community and will immediately work to address issues related to air conditioning and filtration along with adding handwashing stations and bottle fillers as first steps.

SMFC Education Foundation - Gilead Approves a \$500,000 Grant

Yes, you read that right! We are tremendously grateful to Gilead for their generosity and for the grant writing capabilities of the Education Foundation members. I hope you will read the details of this exciting grant in the announcement below from Colleen Sullivan, SMFC Education Foundation President.

SMFC Education Foundation - Hillbarn Theatre's Gift to the SMFCSD Community

The Hillbarn Theatre is giving us a "Happy Holidays Concert." How it works: This special [SMFC Education Foundation Concert Link](#) will be active until midnight on December 25, 2020 and can be used by District families. Read more in Announcements below.

Our Schools Take Giving To Heart

We know that even though times are hard for many, generosity is all around. We are so proud of our students and families for their work on behalf of community members in need this holiday season. I share just a couple of recent examples:

- **Abbott Middle School** put together a Donations Team who generated \$8,375 for community families through personal messaging, volunteer outreach and connection with a local community partner. One student raised \$700 through his own Facebook drive! All proceeds and gift cards went directly to families in need.



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- The **Meadow Heights** Student Council raised donations of ninety (90!) \$20 Target Gift Cards for Life Moves Shelter, and parents from the community donated another \$3,600 for families in need — a total of \$5,400! To make this happen, students did a wonderful job preparing videos for classes, promoting the program to families and turning their spirit of giving into reality. Principal Fraumeni said, “The students did a truly amazing job! And the outpouring of generosity of our Meadow Heights community has kept me going during these challenging times!!”
- **Beach Park Elementary’s** community collected an impressive amount of supplies and food for Samaritan House. Principal Snow shared, “This was an amazing real-life example for the students to practice kindness and empathy for others.”

These last items in my *Update* remind me that even though it has been a difficult year, we are a strong community that pulls together in times of need, and we will continue to do so as the new year begins. I hope that you are able to find some time for yourselves and find joy with your family and friends, even if it is virtually. I send my wishes to you for a wonderful holiday season and a happy and healthy 2021!

Sincerely,
Dr. Joan Rosas

Upcoming Events

- Holiday Break: No School: Monday, December 21 - Friday, January 1, 2021
- Staff Work Day: No School: Monday, January 4, 2021
- Equity Task Force, Tuesday, January 12, 2021, 7:00 pm via Zoom
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: No School, Monday, January 18, 2021
- Board Meeting, Thursday, January 21, 2021, 6:30 pm via Zoom
- Special Education District Advisory Committee (SEDAC) Meeting, Tuesday, January 26, 2021, 7:00 pm via Zoom
- Board Study Session, Saturday, January 30, 2021, 1:00 pm via Zoom

Announcements:

Preschool Registration for 2021-2022 School Year

New preschool student registration information for the 2021-2022 school year is now available on the District's preschool webpage ([state subsidized](#) and [fee-based](#) information). Please share these flyers with your community: State-subsidized ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)) and Fee-based (see [flyer for information](#) for new and returning families). Deadlines are coming up, so please check the web pages for most current information.



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Registration for 2021-2022 School Year

New student registration information for the 2021-2022 school year was announced in November. Deadlines come up quickly, so don't forget to check ["How to Register for the 2021-2022 School Year" web page](#). Families with students who will be new to the SMFCSD next school year can find eligibility requirements, the registration and transfer processes and valuable school information. Please share this information with your community.

SMFC Education Foundation Update from Colleen Sullivan, President

We have fabulous news to share with all of you. On Friday, December 4, Gilead approved our \$500,000 grant application.

This grant allows us to address the health and safety issues caused by the pandemic as well as embark on a three-year academic leadership initiative to strengthen science education for all 11,000 District students. Thermal scanners have been ordered so they can be placed at school sites and SMFCSD buildings in January. This technology will help ensure the health and safety of our staff, students and families. The funding for the three-year Science Teacher on Special Assignment (ToSA) will impact science education in our District for years to come.

We are so grateful for Gilead's willingness to partner with us on this long-term academic leadership initiative as well as to help protect District students and staff as they head back to school.

One event you can depend on in 2021 is the Education Foundation's annual **Readathon** from January 22 - February 5. This year will be extra special as we highlight books from our "Culturally Relevant Literature" Project. Our community has the blessing of diversity so our goal this year is to broaden the perspectives of our students through lesser-known picture books that reflect the multifaceted nature of those who call San Mateo and Foster City home. So mark your calendars, stock up on books from our partners at the public and school libraries and get ready to track those reading minutes! Top readers and fundraisers from each school will enjoy a virtual reception with local children's author, Khalid White.

Thank you to Hillbarn Theatre: As mentioned in Dr. Rosas's *Update* above, District community members have access to this year's "[Happy Holiday's Concert](#)," as a gift from the Hillbarn Theatre team. This show was designed to bring joy to the community during the season and they thought of no better way than to share it with the amazing teachers, students, schools, and families. How this works: This special [SM/FC Education Foundation Concert Link](#) will be active until December 25th at midnight and can be used by our District families.

We thank Hillbarn Theatre for their partnership and bringing local theater to our homes. Special thanks to Dan Demers and the Hillbarn Theatre community.



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If you are interested in joining our board, helping with marketing, grant writing, social media posting or as a school liaison please visit our [website](#) and click on Join Us.

Thank you,
Colleen Sullivan
SMFC Education Foundation President

Wellness Corner

- **Newsletter - December Issue:** Each month our Wellness Team publishes *Pondering Parenting* containing stories and guidance, based in the 3R's: Routines, Relationships and Regulation, to help your family navigate the everyday puzzles that arise in supporting your learner(s). Check out the December 2020 Issue, "Navigating Grief and Loss during the Holidays ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)). Find back issues of *Pondering Parenting* on the [Wellness Newsletters](#) on the District website.
- **Emergency Financial Assistance for Families:** The County of San Mateo still has \$5 million in unspent funding for emergency financial assistance for individuals/families. This funding can help anyone living in San Mateo County pay rent, mortgage, utilities, transportation, car repair, medical expenses or other emergency needs. More information can be found on the [County of San Mateo website](#).
- **Guidance and Assistance during the Holidays:** The holidays can be a difficult time for many. Star Vista has provided a list of important community resources for families ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)). In addition, you can find support on our [community resources page](#).
- **Parent Education Series from Adolescent Counseling Services** - Four free sessions are coming up beginning on January 7, 2021. Questions should be directed to Catherine Wohlwend at catherine@acs-teens.org.
 - January 7, 2021, 6:30-7:30 pm: Talking to Your Teen, Session 1. [Register Here!](#)
 - January 21, 2021, 6:30-7:30 pm: Talking to Your Teen. Session 2. [Register Here!](#)
 - February 4, 2021, 6:30-7:30 pm: What is "Normal" for Teens? [Register Here!](#)
 - February 18, 2021, 6:30-7:30 pm: How Do I Set Limits with My Teen? [Register Here!](#)