



SAN MATEO- FOSTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Update from Superintendent Rosas Tuesday, August 4, 2020

Message Summary: What You Need to Know

- **COVID-19 Conditions:** San Mateo County is currently on the State's Watch List
- **NEW 2020-2021 School Calendar:** First day of student instruction is Monday, August 17
- **Start of Year Class Assignments:** ALL SMFCSD students will begin the year in Distance Learning assigned to a teacher from their home school. Class assignments and schedules will be sent to you from your schools during the week of August 10.
- **Memo of Understanding (MOU) with San Mateo Elementary Teachers' Association (SMETA):** SMETA has ratified the MOU for the Distance Learning program and it will be presented to the Board of Trustees on Thursday, Aug 6.
- **Family Support – Technology and Other Materials:** Please see full message for technology and other material considerations.
- **Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application:** [Apply now](#) for free and reduced-price meals
- **Assistance for Families–San Mateo County Relief Fund:** San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund information ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)).
- **Give Your Suggestions to District Reopening Teams:** Please complete [this survey](#) to share suggestions with District Reopening Teams

Dear SMFCSD Families,

Today I share with you several key developments of the past two weeks and provide information to you as we look forward to the start of the school year.

Current COVID-19 Conditions

On July 16, due to escalating cases in San Mateo County, the Board of Trustees decided that all SMFCSD students will begin the year in Full Time Distance Learning. On the following day, Friday, July 17, the Governor established a protocol for determining when schools can reopen based upon each county's status on the State Monitoring List. As of Sunday, August 2, San Mateo County was formally placed on this list. (Learn more on the [CA Department of Public Health](#) website.)

By their decision on July 16, the Board set our direction, and at present, we are aligned and in compliance with State guidelines under the Monitoring List. We are fully immersed in preparations for Full Time Distance Learning and continue to plan for the eventual return of students to campus.



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Calendar - First Day of Student Instruction Is Monday, August 17

A revision to the 2020-21 District Calendar was approved by the Board at their meeting on July 23, 2020. Students will begin instruction on August 17, 2020 and will engage in the required 180 days of instruction throughout the 2020-2021 year. The key change to the calendar is that all three previously scheduled professional development days, September 18, January 4 and March 12, have been moved to the week of August 10, and as a result, these days will be instructional days for students. Please find the [Revised District Calendar](#) on the District website.

Start of Year Class Assignments

Thank you for your response to the Fall Instructional Model Selection for elementary school families. We recognize how important this selection is to each family. The effort was conducted to provide the District with important data about preferences for both Distance Learning and Hybrid Model as we go into the school year. Simultaneously, we surveyed our staff to enable us to identify those members requesting accommodation (and therefore assignment to the Distance Learning program) during COVID-19 due to health or other considerations. Our goal was to use the resulting data to build both our Distance Learning and Hybrid Model programs, including class lists and teacher assignments.

This is a complicated process. At the present time we continue to pursue responses from both families and staff so that we have 100% completion. It was our hope that we could fairly evenly match our students and staff requesting Distance Learning, and to prioritize a match of students and teachers within school sites. Based upon the preliminary data, our families and staff across grades and school sites are not easily separated into classes within schools or even across the District.

Given that all students will begin the year in Distance Learning, we believe the correct course of action at this time is to follow our usual practice and begin the year by placing students in classes with teachers from their home school. This will allow staff, students and their families to begin school on August 17 connected to their schools and with the highest amount of familiarity possible. It will also give the District leadership the necessary time to make Distance Learning and Hybrid Model class assignments in the least disruptive manner when the time comes that we can reopen school campuses. **Class assignments and schedules will be sent to you from your schools during the week of August 10.**

We do recognize that as a District we have had to change our direction throughout the spring and summer to respond to this ever shifting situation. Please know that we have been working diligently to provide the best response possible for all parties under these changing conditions and we thank you for your patience and flexibility.

Memo of Understanding (MOU) with San Mateo Elementary Teachers' Association (SMETA)

Negotiations have concluded with SMETA for the Full Time Distance Learning program and SMETA members have ratified the MOU. It will be presented to the Board for approval at their



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meeting this Thursday, August 6. This document defines the Distance Learning program for the fall and includes the following:

- Full Time Distance Learning will include daily live engagement between the teacher and students for the purposes of instruction/interaction, progress monitoring and maintaining school connectedness. Live instruction/interaction shall be substantially equivalent to District in-person instruction/interaction in the Hybrid Model which is four hours per day. This shall include the following activities:
 - Daily morning community meeting for all students
 - Provide students and families a weekly agenda/overview
 - New curriculum content
 - Curriculum review and practice
 - Timely feedback on student work assignments
 - Diagnostic assessment
 - Small group instruction
 - Whole group instruction
 - Social Emotional Learning lessons (SEL)
 - Daily closing activity/reflection for elementary
- Full Time Distance Learning will adhere to the District content aligned grade level standards which provides a substantially equivalent challenge to in-person instruction.
- Work hours for elementary school teachers during distance learning will be 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. including a one hour lunch generally from 12:00-1:00 p.m. Work hours for middle school will follow an assigned bell schedule.

Family Support – Technology and Other Materials

As we work to acquire additional Chromebooks for our students, we have learned that they are both in high demand and short supply due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. We have an order placed which is expected to arrive in the fall. We will continue distribution of District Chromebooks and hotspots that we have in stock to students over the coming weeks, prioritizing our most vulnerable students. The Technology Team will communicate directly with these families and manage the distribution.

Some families have asked what technology their children should have to connect with teachers during Distance Learning. We suggest the following considerations:

- A device with a webcam and microphone, preferably some type of laptop where they are built-in, but not necessarily. Desktops with that equipment will suffice.
- Memory: Chromebooks should have a minimum 4 gigabytes of RAM, while a Windows device or Mac would require 8 or more.
- Caution: Be cautious of Chromebook equipment and its expiration date and ask sellers to confirm dates. Seek out Chromebooks that expire in 2024 or later. Reference [Auto Update policy - Google Chrome Enterprise Help](#).
- Tablets: From our experience with a wide variety of tablets during Distance Learning last spring, we have learned that while they may work, they are not a preferred device.



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Our Technology Team is working with school sites to establish a support system to help staff, students and families with the use of their devices.

Additionally, we realize that students may need textbooks and materials to start the year. We are assembling those materials and you will hear from your principals as to when and how to pick them up. Remember that we still must follow physical distancing protocols that limit gathering on campus at this time. We ask families to call your school office with questions.

Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application

The [application](#) for free and reduced-price meals for the 2020-21 year is now available and we encourage families to apply as soon as possible. [Learn more](#) on the District website.

Assistance for Families–San Mateo County Relief Fund

San Mateo County has established an Immigrant Relief Fund, providing one-time payments of up to \$1,000 for immigrant families left out of the federal government's relief efforts. This document includes eligibility requirements, information on how to apply and support for those without internet access. San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund information is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Give Your Suggestions to Reopening Teams

While all students are beginning in Distance Learning on August 17, our Reopening Teams continue to work on logistics for returning to school campuses. Families have expressed their desire to provide suggestions and feedback to our Reopening Teams. Please complete [this survey](#) and a Team Leader will get in touch with you.

While we know this will be a year like no other, as educators we are excited for the return of our students to classrooms, even virtual ones. We appreciate the challenges faced all across our community, and we continue our commitment to keep you updated through regular communication.

Thank you,
Dr. Joan Rosas
Superintendent