

August 11, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we prepare for opening of Distance Learning as mandated by Alameda County Health, we hope that you enjoy the remainder of the summer. Our team continues to work hard to get ready for your children to return to school.

Updates on Summer Planning for Re-Opening

Instructional Programs Next Year

As announced at the June 23 Board of Education meeting, the District is currently planning to provide both a “Flexible Learning Program” and a “Remote Learning Program” in 2020-21. The Flexible Learning Program will provide either distance or in-person instruction - with precautions - as health conditions permit. Since health officials mandated a suspension of in-person instruction, students in the Flexible Learning Program will begin the school year with distance learning. Parents should have selected their program of choice by now. We are currently basing staffing for these programs based on selections. If parents did not yet make a selection, please notify Jessica Stockwell, Administrative Assistant for Student Services (jstockwell@alamedaunified.org), of your selection right away. Extensive information on these two programs - including FAQs, board presentations, and copies of all letters sent to families in recent weeks - are available on the [Planning for 2020-21 web page](#).

Curriculum and Research-Based Targeted Instruction

The Remote Learning Program is 100 percent distance learning for the 2020-21 school year. Mild/moderate students will receive instruction through *Acellus*, an on-line learning program, with the support of AUSD teachers and an adult in the family. The Flexible Learning Program is aligned to the California Content Standards. Education Specialists for both the Remote and Flexible Learning Programs will utilize research-based programs to meet targeted needs, that include but are not limited to *Lexia*, *Language Live!*, and *Number Worlds*. *Unique* will be used for our students with more significant needs.

For both programs, instruction will be supported by Special Education Specialists, Related Services Providers (i.e., Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists), Specialists (i.e., School Psychologists, Behaviorists) and Paraprofessionals to meet student needs.

Additionally, we have re-examined our moderate to severe programs due to the intensity of our students' needs and their limited capability to learn remotely. We are continuing to work out schedules and other details in collaboration with our teachers union. We also piloted schedules and pedagogy during Extended School Year (ESY) in an effort to increase engagement through project-based instruction and activities. These programs will be incorporated into both the Remote and Flexible Learning Programs, with needs being met by Education Specialists, Related Service Providers and Paraprofessionals.

Please also note that Town Halls dedicated to Special Education finalization and implementation of schedules were held on July 23rd and July 30th. For those who were not able to attend, the recordings and meeting presentations are available on our [COVID-19 Special Education Resources](#) page.

IEP Aligned Plan

In accordance with Senate Bill 98, which was approved on June 29, 2020 by Governor Newsom, IEP Aligned Contingency Plans for emergency conditions will be provided to parents at the beginning of the school year. These plans will be more “IEP aligned,” indicating how students are served in their areas of need for instruction and related services. Student schedules will also indicate the amount of time for services and instruction, which permits more time for special education services in the new Flexible and Remote schedules. Our plan is to distribute these plans by the beginning of the year. We encourage parents to contact their case managers for questions or to provide input into the plan.

Next, virtual IEP meetings will be held in chronological order as due and as quickly as possible. For situations regarding placement, IEP meetings will be convened sooner. IEP plans will also address emergencies as stipulated in SB98. Testing and assessment is still being explored and negotiated with our labor partners. We have gathered information from the SELPA and webinars. More information will come. A few agency psychologists were hired to assist with testing in the summer months while district psychologists are on their contractual break.

Additional Learning and Support

Also in accordance with Senate Bill 98, “learning loss” needs to be addressed with steps taken toward recovery. Before the Senate Bill, AUSD already planned “Summer Additional Instruction” held in July, as we believed these were the right steps to take. Sessions for the fall will be announced soon.

Family Learning Conference

Finally, the district is providing a Family Learning Conference on Tuesday, August 25th. The special education department will present a session on tips for supporting distance learning. Other examples of session topics are: managing the challenges of parenting in a time of uncertainty, technology tools, self-care. Do watch the district website for further information. We hope that you can attend.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us as we prepare for school opening. I know that staff wish they could see our students again in person, but they also know that we must keep students and staff safe. Finally, please know that an “Alternate Dispute Resolution” (ADR) process without attorney fees is available to resolve concerns.

Take very good care. Continue to watch for updates in your e-mail.

Sincerely,

Pam Kazee
Director of Special Education
Mary Busby, Secondary and Adult Transition Special Education Coordinator
Betty Lin, Pre-K and Elementary Special Education Coordinator
CC: Pasquale Scuderi, Superintendent
Kirsten Zazo, Chief Student Support Officer
Sara Stone, Chief Academic Officer



