

Superintendent Responses to Comments/Questions about the 2020-2021 LCAP Draft from DAC, DELAC, and the Parent Input Form

Actions in particular for students who experienced significant learning loss due to school closures in 2019-2020 school year.

Q: I personally don't feel safe with in-person classes for several reasons. Will distance learning remain an option?

A: Both in-person and distance learning will be offered this school year. Parents will register for one program for the remainder of the school year. This is necessary in order to determine funding and staffing for both programs. The district is pleased to continue to offer distance learning as an alternative to in-person during the pandemic, as we understand many of our families have medically fragile or compromised family members.

Q: When classes resume in-person, will students have to wear masks?

A: The district and county reopening plans, approved by the public health director, requires that all staff and students, TK-8, wear face coverings that cover the mouth and nose consistent with public health guidance. During physical education, face coverings are not required if physical distance is maintained. Some students/staff may be exempt from wearing face masks. In these instances, a face shield may be worn.

Q: How does my student who has an IEP (Individual Education Plan) receive the services or accommodations?

A: During distance learning, special education services continued. IEPs were amended to include distance learning as the mode of instruction. Additionally, in-person services resumed for a small number of students with moderate to severe disabilities.

Q: There is short mention of students who are learning at an accelerated pace, but no plan of action is spelled out for a return to school. Are there going to be tiered supports for students with little to no learning loss?

A: Classroom instruction is differentiated to meet students where they are at, whether below, on, or above grade level. Small group instruction is one way the teacher is able to group students according to need and provide targeted instruction. When a tiered structure is in place across a grade level, students are mixed across the grade level and grouped according to need for a specified amount of time during the day, the range of "supports" is from intervention or remedial lessons to enrichment based on student need. The LCAP specifically required districts to address learning loss in the plan.

Q: How much is too much screen time?

A: The American Academy of Pediatrics changed its screen-time guidelines in 2015. This group had previously recommended two hours or less per day. Now, there isn't a set limit. Instead, the Academy recommends making sure that screen time does not substitute for any sleep or active time. The group also encourages that kids spend screen time with others, not alone. And certain times of the day, such as meals and bedtime, should be media-free. The guidelines also ask parents to put away their own screens while spending time with their kids.

The researchers sorted screen time into five types: passive (such as watching a movie), interactive (such as playing a video game), social (such as texting or FaceTiming), educational (such as a virtual class) or something else. Educational screen time was linked to doing better in school and had no bad health effects.

Q: Will extra support and tutoring be offered?

A: In distance learning, extra support is provided after all core instructional minutes have been met. There is time allocated daily in the afternoon for this purpose. When in-person instruction begins, extra support will occur in the classroom or through push-in or pull-in interventions (method will be based on safety precautions).

Comment: The distance learning program is similar to what would be a normal day of instruction while in person. The breaks and lunch may differ, but the time and effort in the assignments are a full day of interaction.

Response: The school closures in the spring due to the pandemic marked the beginning of a new reality for schools around the world. School or instruction in the spring was a time of "crisis schooling," as schools scramble to get devices in students' hands and draft a remote learning plan. Moving forward, we used the lessons learned from around the world to develop a more purposeful and intentional plan for distance learning. This included district-wide consistent schedules and expectations such as implementing the core grade level curriculum. We recognize there is an urgent need for acceleration of learning due to school closures.

Comment: Resume to in-person learning as soon as possible.

Response: The district plans to open when it is feasible to do so putting the safety of students and staff first.

After reading the plan, please share your input on the actions related to distance learning including how to assess pupil participation and progress.

Q: We don't have the internet at home, how do my children access learning?

A: In order to close the digital divide, this fall the district will provide hotspots to families who can not access the internet from home during distance learning. Please call your child's school for more information.

Q: Will my child have daily contact with his teachers?

A: Under the newly enacted state law (SB-98), distance learning in California must ensure daily live interaction for every child with teachers and students peers for the purposes of instruction, progress monitoring, and maintaining school connectedness.

Q: Will teachers check my child's work when it is completed and grade it?

A: All students will receive grades for academic areas. Grades will be based on standards and report cards will be issued. Students' work will be checked for completeness and accuracy. Completing student work counts toward participation during distance learning.

Q: If there is a legitimate appointment, that a student normally would have been excused for, are students getting a zero for participation that day? Do we still need to submit doctor's notes, etc?

A: Participation counts towards attendance. Just like with in-person learning, attending an appointment constitutes an absence for a portion or all of the day depending on the length of the absence. If a student is absent for an excused reason, then a note is required or call to indicate the absence is excused.

Q: Logged in does not mean they are always learning. Is there any tracking of who is turning in work and participating in class not just logging in online or in zoom?

A: Participation and engagement take into account a variety of factors including logging on and completion of work. Additionally, students will receive grades for academic subjects, therefore, assignments are monitored for both completion and accuracy/understanding.

Comments: 1) Assessment by the teacher/state of California has always been testing. Online testing would be the exact same thing for multiple choice questions/answers (bubble fill).

2) Testing would probably be the best way, yet it seems very flawed to be doing it all online

Response: Assessment can and should occur in a variety of ways. In fact, most assessments occur during instruction and in a formative matter such as short, frequent checks for understanding. The digital platform does not restrict testing to solely multiple choice nor does state testing. There are a variety of tools available to assess understanding and to monitor students during testing. These tools include monitoring the screen a student is accessing or working in as well as administering a test using zoom, for example. Assessing online is not the easiest way to check for student understanding. There are instances when parents or others assist. This makes it challenging to know if the teaching was successful and to identify the needs and next steps for learning for the student.

Comment: Track attendance.

Response: The state requires schools to closely monitor and document student attendance and participation during distance learning. Schools must document daily participation and take daily attendance.

Comment: The parent access to Aeries and GoGuardian along with the continuity of the Google Classroom platform and learning apps accessed through Clever have been helpful for our family to make sure that our students are completing and understanding the curriculum.

Response: Parents actively engaging in their child's education show extremely positive outcomes. There are many online tools for parents to use. We thank you for actively participating and using these tools to monitor and assist your child.

Comment: Distance learning has been very engaging this fall. The rigors and requirements are so much more than the spring. I believe the teachers are doing an excellent job with the information sharing and engagement.

Response: Another component of SB 98, the state law enacted this year, is that schools provide grade level content standards aligned instruction at a level of quality and rigor equivalent to in-person instruction. Our district adopted a high level standards-aligned curriculum. We believe deep implementation of grade level curriculum sets high expectations and rigor for teaching and learning.

After reading the plan, please share your input on actions to support pupils with unique needs and pupil learning loss during distance learning.

Comment: Distance learning offers virtually no benefits to children with special needs and ELL students. Consider the children with sensory, visual, physical, auditory disabilities. How are these needs being met daily via a video meeting?

Response: Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and school closures, we did not have an option but to offer distance learning. We recognize the challenge of serving all students, especially those with disabilities during distance learning. Therefore, after consultation with the public health director and others, we recently opened in-person programs for students with moderate to severe disabilities.

Comment: Have smaller class zooms for kids needing extra help Use the breakout rooms online on zoom with the student and teacher or student and paraprofessional teaching the student(s) in one-on-one or small intervention groups.

Response: Most teachers are using breakout sessions, if possible. This is dependent on personnel available to assist with the groups.

Comment: Speech needs to be done in person.

Response: Ideally speech services are provided in-person. At the onset of the pandemic, no in-person services were provided. This fall, classes and services did resume in-person for one of our most impacted populations, students with moderate to severe disabilities. When in-person school returns, this service will resume in-person, unless a family opts to remain on distance learning at which time the service will remain virtual. There are cases when schools have to contract these services out virtually when a service provider can not be found. We are thankful that we do not need to do this at this time, unless a student has opted for distance learning.

Comment: I have already participated in an online IEP for the 2020-21 year and it was the smoothest one I have had in 3 years we have been doing these. The accommodations necessary for my sons learning are seamlessly integrated into the programs being used.

Response: Thank you for the positive feedback. Our staff has worked hard to ensure meaningful IEP meetings and seamless supports to our students.

Comment: Extra support time needs to not be an optional offering it needs to be used with better effectiveness here

Response: This is good feedback. Perhaps better structuring or scheduling of this time will improve the effectiveness of this time and intent for it.

Comment: Record the lessons each day so those can watch the lesson while doing their assignments. Not all households have an educated person at home to help students with the technology or to answer questions.

Response: The district recognizes the challenge presented to working parents and/or households where there is not an adult to support the students. It is the desire that teachers provide recorded lessons for these families. Additionally, recorded lessons support students by providing the opportunity to repeatedly view lessons or portions of a lesson and to pause the lesson, as needed.

Comments/Questions related to actions related to supporting the mental health and social-emotional well-being of all during the school year.

Q: Is a 20 minute session of social emotional learning each day enough?

A: The 20 minute daily session of social emotional learning is a minimum amount for all students. SEL is taught as an integrated part of the curriculum in addition to a stand alone lesson. Some students may require more and would receive more support through small group guidance lessons, for example. Additionally, our English Language Arts Curriculum for TK-5 added booster lessons on the topic of COVID and integrated SEL into these lessons as well.

Q: Are counselors available to students if they need to talk?

A: Yes, teachers can connect a student to a counselor as needed. Each school has an assigned counselor and psychologist. You may ask your child's teacher via email, call the school, or check the school's website for the counselor's contact information. A counseling request form will be made available soon on school websites for parents to request assistance for their student.

Comment: My child's teachers are doing a great job keeping him motivated and enjoying the subject matter.

Response: Thank you for the positive feedback.

Comment: Shorter zoom meetings and structured daily schedule.

Response: These are good ideas for predictability, keeping on task, and increasing engagement. A district-wide schedule was created to provide structure and equity. The recommendation is for zoom meetings to occur in chunks at the onset and closing of the day, which includes SEL, and during math, ELA, and ELD.

Comments: 1) Many kids and adults are struggling right now mentally with so many different issues across our nation, and not just school related. I'm glad our district is keeping this important piece available.

2) This is a hard school year, and we all have to support and understand the well being of the students

Response: The pandemic and school closures have been challenging for students and adults, alike. Our district is committed to creating socially and emotionally safe environments where students and educators can thrive using trauma informed practices and positive behavioral interventions & supports. Social emotional learning is an important component providing is part of this framework and a process through which children and adults name and understand emotions, set and achieve positive goals, and show empathy for others. It teaches life-long tools to self-regulate and improve outcomes for all.

After reading the plan, please share your input on actions related to pupil re-engagement and family engagement and outreach during distance learning.

Comment: Distance learning punishes students who have working parents, parents that don't speak English, and students that do not have internet access.

Response: Distance learning is a response to a world-wide pandemic. World wide students are learning from home and the impact has afflicted many families beyond how schools changed. It is an incredibly complex decision for schools to continue distance learning. It is a decision that requires balancing educational needs against health and safety concerns, all within the context of an ongoing public health and economic calamity.

Translation support is provided to our non-English speaking families as much as possible and English Language Development instruction continues to be provided as a core subject to our students identified as English Learners.

Families without internet access are provided hotspots. The district has taken the measures possible to provide digital equity/access to all learners.

Comment: This is important for the kids to be able to interact with others. My kids sure do miss their friends.

Response: Limited or no social interaction has been challenging for students and adults alike. The integration of collaborative structures improved with distance learning, yet the time and technology limit these opportunities.

After reading the plan, please share your input on actions related to how the district provides adequate meals to pupils during both in-person and distance learning.

Comment: The meals have been amazing and the staff is always friendly. Having meals available for all students has been very helpful.

Response: Thank you for acknowledging the staff and service.

Q: Can there also be an afternoon or 11-12 p.m. pick up time?

A: The district opted to distribute meals in the morning in order to accommodate working families and provide both breakfast and lunch at one time.

Q: How can students learn if all they had for lunch is chocolate milk and a cookie?

A: Our meals follow the requirements set by the federal government which states lunch must include the following:

2 oz protein

1/2 cup fruit/ fruit juice

3/4 cup vegetable

1 grain bread (or 8-9 weekly)

8 oz. milk

Currently, there are Nationwide Waivers to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through School Year 2020–2021

These waivers consist of:

- Meal Pattern Flexibility
- Parents/Guardians to be able to pick up meals
- Non-Congregate Feeding