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Los Alamitos Unified Schools Reopen for Modified In-Person Instruction

WHAT'S HAPPENING:

About 2800 students returned to their elementary school classrooms today in the Los Alamitos Unified School District to resume the school year under a hybrid model combining modified in-person instruction with distance learning. The remainder of the District's elementary school students continue to be enrolled in 100% distance learning through the LosAl@Home program.

Now that the COVID-19 situation has improved so that Orange County has moved from the Purple to the less restrictive Red tier of state pandemic monitoring, the District's two middle schools and Los Alamitos High School are also scheduled to resume modified in-person instruction later this month.

WHY THIS IS HAPPENING TODAY:

The District wants to provide families with a choice of how their children can receive the safest and most rigorous instruction possible during the pandemic. Los Alamitos Unified applied and was approved for a California Department of Public Health waiver to reopen elementary schools.

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE:

“We have longed for this day ever since we had to close our doors back in March. I am deeply proud of the extraordinary team effort that brought us back here. Months of planning and problem solving by a districtwide committee to make sure we could safely reunite. Countless hours by teachers completely reimagining classroom instruction. Tireless efforts by our maintenance professionals to thoroughly sanitize our campuses and reconfigure them to maximize student safety. Steadfast leadership from principals and other administrators. Positive outreach enlisting parents as our partners in safety. And finally the unwavering support of our Board of Education. This is a very big day. We are prepared. We are pleased to welcome our students back on campus. We are truly Better Together!”

— Dr. Andrew Pulver, Superintendent, Los Alamitos Unified School District

HOW DOES THE HYBRID MODEL WORK?

Students at each grade level from Transitional Kindergarten to 5th grade have been assigned to either an A or B cohort— a group of students with a teacher who remain together and do not mix with other groups. Each cohort attends school in-person for half of their school day — just under three hours — and learns remotely at home the other half of the school day. One cohort comes to school in the morning, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and

Friday, and the other cohort attends in the afternoon. Cohorts alternate attending in person on Wednesday mornings.

With the encouragement of principals, many families visited their children's campus over the Labor Day weekend to familiarize students with classroom locations, entrance/exit procedures for Reopening Day, and changes made to prevent student crowding.

HOW THE DISTRICT MADE THIS HAPPEN:

In June, Los Alamitos Unified School District formed a committee made up of more than 70 teachers and administrators from every District school site. The committee met more than 30 times and reviewed nearly 9,000 responses from staff and family surveys. In addition, the planning team sought out the guidance of state and local health and education agencies to devise a comprehensive [School Opening and Safety Plan](#).

The plan provides two pathways for students, allowing families to make the choice they believe is best for their children:

- A 100% distance learning pathway through our LosAl@Home program
- A traditional schooling pathway conducted through a hybrid program combining modified in-person instruction and distance learning.

WHAT KEY SAFETY PRECAUTIONS HAS THE DISTRICT INSTITUTED?

- All school staff were required to complete a COVID-19 safety training.
- Principals have enlisted parents in "shared responsibility" for monitoring children's health and not allowing sick students to come to school.
- Contact-less thermometers were provided to all school sites. Students have their temperature checked each day before entering a classroom.
- Teachers and students must wear masks while they are on campus except while eating or engaged in physical activity.
- Social distancing markers have been placed on ground outside classroom and restrooms and student meeting areas to prevent crowding.
- Each school has been equipped with full stocks of sanitization supplies, such hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, sanitizing wipes.
- All classrooms are cleaned and sanitized between cohort sessions and at the end of each day.
- Portable Hand Washing Stations were installed on all campuses.
- Face masks were distributed for all students and staff.
- Campus entrance and exit procedures were redesigned with students assigned to specific gates by alphabet to prevent crowding. One-way walking paths also have been marked to reduce concentration of students.
- Dedicated isolation areas have been set up at each school to accommodate any children or staff who become ill during the school day.
- Staggered schedules are used for regular handwashing, restroom use, and "brain break" time outside the classroom. (At this time, students are not allowed to use playground equipment.)
- Additional shaded structures have been set up on campuses to facilitate outdoor instruction when possible.
- Water fountains have been shut down and sealed off. Contact-less bottle filling stations have been installed.
- Parents and non-essential visitors are not allowed on campus.