

August 16, 2020

Dear AUSD Families and Staff,

We are pleased to announce we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Alameda Education Association (AEA), our teachers union, that covers our instructional programs for next year. This agreement now allows us to bring some clarity to aspects of the upcoming school year that families and staff alike have been wondering about.

We know that many of our employees and families have been feeling anxious about daily schedules and class assignments for the upcoming year. While these two items are the administration's responsibility to determine, the schedules impact our employees' working conditions and we wanted to work closely with them on those impacts. Please know that it was important for us to spend the necessary time with our labor partners to develop a detailed agreement that provides the greatest level of support for our employees as well as guaranteed instructional time for our students.

We will send out a much more detailed and expansive communication next week, but as of tonight we want to share the following:

1. We have moved to a single, full day instructional schedule for all students at all grade levels (elementary, middle, and high) in our Flexible Learning Program while we are in distance learning. This essentially means no A/B split-day cohorts for now. All students will have a single schedule that begins in the morning. The complete schedules will be shared next week. Additional details on the single schedule and the division of synchronous and asynchronous learning are also forthcoming. The actual weekly virtual bell schedule is being determined by district staff.
2. This shift is a result of many factors, not the least of which is the fact that external public health conditions related to the pandemic seemingly point to us being in distance learning for at least a few months. With the A/B small group program designed in large part for in-person instruction, we feel the single schedule in distance learning will be more supportive of staff, students, and families alike. The schedules will still allow for flexibility to form smaller work groups within the instructional blocks.
3. The model we are working on still features four days a week of direct instruction for students in our Flexible Learning Program (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday), plus a live check-in on Wednesdays. The District maintains a previously communicated need to utilize Wednesdays for honoring the contractual preparation rights of teachers and addressing the reality that quality online learning will require even more preparation time than in-class instruction.

4. The instruction students receive in our Flexible Learning Program will include both live instruction (e.g., a teacher delivering instruction to the whole class and/or small groups) as well as independent work.

While we believe we will be in distance learning for the foreseeable future, we will nonetheless continue developing options for an in-person return when public health officials determine it is safe to do so.

These decisions have given us a little time to more thoughtfully consider the A/B cohort assignments in our Flexible Program for our eventual return to in-person instruction. That return still might require us to utilize split cohorts, but public health conditions may expand or limit our options for return by the time it is safe to bring students and staff back to our campuses.

Both the AEA and the Board of Education still need to vote on this MOU. Once it is ratified, we will send more information. But I am hoping having this preliminary information will help alleviate some anxiety and uncertainty this weekend.

Respectfully,

Pasquale Scuderi
Superintendent