

March 25, 2020

Dear Families,

This week marks our second week of both suspended in-class instruction and our county's shelter in place. I know you have all been juggling a lot of new anxieties, new responsibilities to balance, and new concerns for your loved ones.

To help provide some clarity about how your child's education will continue during this difficult time. I have four primary messages to share with you today. This is another fairly long communication, so for those of you who prefer an abbreviated message, our basic messages are as follows:

1. **Our suspension of in-class instruction will now extend until May 1.**
2. **Spring break will proceed as calendared next week March 30-April 3.**
3. **We are sharing with you a high-level schedule for remote learning, so you can start to plan your student's days starting April 6.**
4. **Our distance learning opportunity plan represents our best and most family-centered thinking, one based on a clear and principled commitment to equity, access, and sustained learning.**

Please see the following pages for more detail on these three points. Principals and district staff will be sending out more specific schedules to families and more descriptions of how your students' days could and will be structured later this week.

Respectfully,

Pasquale Scuderi  
Superintendent  
Alameda Unified School District

**1. Suspension of in-class instruction will extend until May 1.**

On Monday night, we communicated to all AUSD staff that we planned to extend in-class suspension through May 1 with the intention of communicating this to families today. This morning, seven Bay Area county health officers, in collaboration with their county superintendents, also made a unified, regional decision to extend school closures and student dismissals from regular school attendance through May 1, 2020 to slow the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) to the maximum extent.

**2. Spring break will proceed as calendared next week March 30-April.**

During this time teachers will not be sending out assignments, and students should not expect to be doing schoolwork, unless they want to continue to engage with our optional activities in the [Online Learning Portal](#).

**3. I am sharing a very high-level remote/distance learning schedule with you.**

This is so you know generally what to expect when our on-line teaching and remote learning launches on April 6. As you review the schedule below please note:

- We do not expect either your students' school days or our educators' school days to replicate what they had with in-person instruction. Remote learning, in other words, will not equate to hours and hours of screen time per day, because we know that would be neither effective nor healthy.
- Instead, there will be periodic check-in's/instruction according to the schedule below, remote "office hours" for students who have questions or need support, and then plenty of independent time during the rest of the day for students to do their work, get exercise, and engage in creative projects -- and also for teachers to prep.
- Later this week, we will be sending out sample school day schedules that will include time for exercise, art, reading books, and other non-digital activities.

Level	Consistent Time of Day Across AUSD and Platform
Elementary	<b>8:20 am - 10:20 am</b> - Each school site will develop a schedule for grade levels/classes to hold ZOOM meetings for students within this time
Middle School	<b>10:30 am - 12:35 pm</b> - Teachers will hold video conferencing, make announcements, and conduct ZOOM meetings for students according to a schedule set by site administrators. We will have more details on this later this week.
High School	<b>12:45 pm - 3:00 pm</b> - Teachers will hold video conferencing, make announcements, and conduct ZOOM meetings for students according to a schedule set by site administrators. We will have more details on this later this week.

**Note:**

*If teachers have already sent schedules out to students, they will re-work those schedules to make them congruent with the framework above. This is the only way we can ensure that all students have access and that we are calibrated and avoid as many conflicts for families as possible system-wide.*

Please also note that the windows of time in this schedule address the times of day when video-conferencing and virtual class meetings can be held. Those windows are not the sum total of the entire school day for students or teachers, however. Your principals will be sending out more guidance by the end of the week, including details on what your student’s day may be like within the framework above and how check-ins, office hours, and attendance will work.

**4. Our distance learning opportunity plan represents our best and most family-centered thinking, one based on a clear and principled commitment to equity, access, and sustained learning.**

No doubt we will need to adjust this plan and structure as we get feedback and perspectives from our front-line practitioners (our teachers and site administrators) and our primary clients (our students and parents). But as we begin to roll out our distance learning opportunities between now and April 6, it is crucial that you understand that we have based our decisions and implementation on key guiding principles, including:

- Teachers and principals will work with students and families to provide meaningful standards- aligned Distance Learning Opportunities.
- All students will have access to these Learning Opportunities.

*Access is defined as students having the technology, time, and support they need to complete learning opportunities. This includes a working device and internet, support from a trusted adult, a physically and psychologically safe environment, and minimal other family responsibilities (ie. child care).*

During this time, we want to empower teachers, families, and students to have time and space to manage this new reality. This may mean slowing down and remembering that less can be more in this current environment. For example, teachers will use the first week after Spring Break to teach new Distance Learning routines and check in on students socio-emotional status.

- We have been especially mindful of the needs of students who receive special education services. We have sent a letter to those families today talking about what will happen with their IEPs, related services, and other supports.

I know a lot of you have questions about how grading and other assessments will work. We will have more details about this going forward, but for now please note that elementary students will receive feedback on their school work, but not grades. Middle and high school students will receive credit/no credit assessment as well as individual feedback. Our positions on this may evolve, and we are staying very connected to how the UC and CSU systems are handling this as their decisions will certainly need to inform ours. Please know that in the complexity and uncertainty surrounding this situation we will be maintaining maximum flexibility and a student-centered approach to current and upcoming decisions on grading and credits.

Many of you may also have questions about how you will be able to support your students on these new distance learning platforms. We are exploring ways of training parents/guardians on this technology as we go forward. In the meantime, please see our [Support for Parent/Guardians web page](#) for basic tutorials on using Zoom, Aeries, and Google Classroom, as well tips for supporting your students at home during this time.

Franklin Roosevelt once said, "Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education."

I feel unapologetic in offering up that sentiment this week because we should not be apologetic at all during these times for recognizing how critical this work is, not only to our students, but also, *through* our work with them, to democracy and the concept of community itself. It is with this perspective in mind that we can, and will, as a community of educators, students, and families, create the best possible learning opportunities for our students under circumstances that are making this already complex work even more challenging and impactful on families.

Respectfully,

Pasquale Scuderi  
Superintendent