Alum Rock Union Elementary School District: Instructional Continuity Plan (Amended)

I. Introduction & Guiding Principles

This Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP) for the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District is a critical component of our commitment to uninterrupted student learning and well-being. It provides a comprehensive framework to ensure the continuity of high-quality education during any emergency or disruption to traditional in-person instruction. This plan fully aligns with the California Department of Education (CDE) guidelines, relevant California Education Code (EC) sections, and Senate Bill (SB) 153 requirements, emphasizing the strategic integration of modern instructional and communication technologies.

Our Core Commitments:

- **Uninterrupted Learning:** Minimize disruption to student learning, ensuring access to instruction that is substantially equivalent to classroom learning.
- **Equitable Access:** Provide equitable access to high-quality instruction for all students, regardless of circumstance, whether in-person, remote, or hybrid.
- **Holistic Support:** Address the diverse academic, social-emotional, and mental health needs of every student.
- **Effective Communication:** Maintain clear, consistent, and two-way communication with students, families, staff, and the broader community.
- **Compliance:** Adhere to all state mandates for instructional continuity and independent study and distance learning programs, **including those outlined in the Alum Rock Educators Association (AREA) Collective Bargaining Agreement regarding class sizes and other working conditions.**
- **Positive Culture:** Foster a positive, safe, and supportive learning environment that nurtures all members of our school community.

II. Required Elements for Instructional Continuity (Per SB 153 & EC 32282)

As an integral part of the District's Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP), this ICP addresses the following state-mandated elements:

1. **Engagement and Communication Protocol (within 5 calendar days):**
    - The District will establish **two-way communication** with pupils and their families as soon as practicable, but no later than five calendar days following an emergency. This initial engagement will focus on establishing contact, assessing

immediate needs, and providing initial support for social-emotional, mental health, and academic well-being.
    - Primary communication channels will include **ParentSquare**, **Gmail**, and **Google Classroom**.
2. **Access to Instruction (within 10 instructional days):**
    - The District will provide access to in-person or remote instruction as soon as practicable, but no more than 10 instructional days following the emergency.
    - Remote instruction will be structured to align with EC sections 51747 and 51749.5, governing Independent Study modalities, ensuring the instructional program is **substantially equivalent** to in-person classroom instruction.
    - The plan supports pupils and families in enrolling in or temporarily reassigning to another school district, county office of education, or charter school if necessary, with residency requirements bypassed.

III. Local Educational Agency (LEA) Support for Quality Catastrophic Independent Study

The Alum Rock Union Elementary School District is deeply committed to offering independent study that is not just an alternative, but a high-quality educational option **substantially equivalent to classroom instruction, should a catastrophic event ever occur, causing the need for distance learning or independent study**.

- **Comparable Funding:** Independent study programs will be funded at a level comparable to classroom instruction to ensure adequate resources.
- **Curriculum & Content Alignment:**
    - The District's adopted curriculum will be utilized, with content meticulously aligned to grade-level standards.
- **Voluntary Enrollment:** Enrollment in independent study is **continuously voluntary**. Students will only enroll if they choose to, and will not be "assigned" to independent study.
- **Teacher Assignment & Credentialing:** Only teachers who have agreed to the assignment and possess a valid credential for the subject/grade level will teach in independent study programs.
- **Board Policies:** The LEA has adopted board policies that:
    - Clearly outline the implementation of independent study, ensuring consistency with applicable state statutes.

    - Include a comprehensive range of quality educational options, encompassing classroom-based, hybrid, and non-classroom-based programs, to best tailor instruction to individual student needs.
- **Multiple Models:** The District offers more than one independent study model to accommodate both short-term and long-term student participation needs during a defined school closure or shutdown emergency.

IV. Instructional Design & Delivery

Our instructional framework is designed for flexibility, enabling adaptation to various emergency scenarios while maintaining academic rigor.

- **Instructional Management System: Google Classroom** will serve as the central hub for daily instructions, assignment distribution, resource access, and student work submission. Teachers will ensure all learning objectives are standards-aligned and achievable.
- **Daily Live Instruction: Zoom** will facilitate daily live, synchronous instruction sessions provided by teachers, fostering real-time interaction and direct teaching.
- **Personalized Learning & Assessment:**
    - **District adopted curriculum and platforms** will be used to give students access to personalized instruction.
    - Regular **formative assessments** will be employed to check for student understanding and guide instruction.
    - Beginning in the 2025–26 school year, approved screening tools (per EC 53008) will be used to monitor early reading difficulties.

V. Teacher Quality & Professional Support

Our independent study teachers meet the same rigorous professional requirements as our classroom-based teachers, ensuring consistent instructional excellence.

- **Student-Teacher Ratio:** The independent study student-teacher ratio will not exceed the average daily attendance (ADA)- teacher ratio in the classroom or, for charter schools, will adhere to relevant contractual agreements. **All class sizes and ratios will comply with the specific provisions outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District and the Alum Rock Educators Association (AREA).** This enables teachers to provide:

    - The necessary direction and resources for students to meet their academic goals independently.
    - Additional assistance, including direct instruction and essential support services for individual student success.
- **Credentialing & Subject Matter Competence:** All independent study teachers are appropriately credentialed employees of the LEA and demonstrate subject matter competence in all core academic subjects they teach.
    - At the secondary level, independent study teachers specialize in their areas of expertise to deliver direct instruction in various formats (classes, small groups, labs, individual sessions, on-site or online).
- **Professional Development & Support:** Independent study teachers have access to, and actively participate in, professional development comparable to that offered to classroom-based teachers, focusing on best practices for distance learning and state content standards. They receive comparable ongoing instructional assistance and support.
- **Collaboration & Compensation:** Independent study teachers participate in relevant LEA committees (e.g., curriculum development, subject/grade level collaboration). Their terms and conditions of employment, including compensation, are comparable to those of classroom-based teachers.
- **Teacher Attributes & Knowledge:** Teachers are knowledgeable about student learning styles, interests, and needs, using this insight to shape instructional strategies and foster strong bonds that promote student success.

VI. Student Admission, Engagement & Comprehensive Support

The District carefully assesses each student's potential for success in a catastrophic independent study program and provides robust support systems.

- **Student Readiness:** We recognize that successful independent study students typically possess motivation, commitment, organizational skills, and academic skills. The school will assist students in strengthening these skills as needed. For elementary students, significant involvement from parents, guardians, or caregivers as knowledgeable teaching assistants is crucial.
- **Support for Diverse Learners:** Students who are not working at grade level, or require support in other areas (e.g., English learners, students with IEPs or Section 504 plans, foster youth, homeless students, or those needing mental health support), will only be admitted to independent study if the District provides appropriate support to ensure their success and progress toward grade-level performance. This includes:

  - Use of supplemental interventions.
  - On-site assistance (tutoring, labs, computer-assisted learning, small group direct instruction).
  - School counseling or social work services.
  - Ongoing diagnostic assessments.
  - Availability of differentiated materials aligned with state standards and the LEA's adopted curriculum.
- **Regular Teacher Interaction:** Students will have regularly scheduled meetings with their teacher(s) on a sufficiently frequent basis to receive instruction, assess progress, and make modifications. At least weekly interaction (in-person or electronic) is recommended. Teachers will also be available for support between meetings (e.g., drop-in, phone, email, labs).
- **Parent/Caregiver Support:** The school provides resources and support for parents, guardians, and other responsible adults assisting independent study students. At the elementary level, opportunities for parent/caregiver education will be provided.
- **Counseling & Holistic Services:** All students have access to counselors and/or other personnel and services to meet their academic, social, career, and mental health needs. Support is provided for students when parents/caregivers are unavailable or not supportive. **Partners in the community and resources that support these various areas include, but are not limited to:**
  - **Alum Rock Counseling Center**
  - **Amigos de Guadalupe**
  - **Bill Wilson Center**
  - **City of San Jose - School Safety Liaison Unit**
  - **Sacred Heart**
  - **Somos Mayfair**
  - **School Safety and Crisis Resources**
    - **If students are frequently absent from distance learning and if it is feasible and safe to do so, administrators and/or community liaisons will conduct home visits to assess the needs of the students and their families so we can assist in removing barriers as much as possible in order for students to continue their learning.**
- **Personal Learning Plans:** All students receive assistance in developing a personal learning plan to prepare them for academic, personal, and school-to-career goals.
- **Addressing Lack of Engagement & Re-engagement:**
  - **Teachers will keep grades up to date** in the District's grading system, reflecting student engagement and academic progress.
  - The LEA will identify students who are struggling (e.g., missing assignments, appointments, unsatisfactory progress, lack of participation in live/synchronous

instruction) and implement **tiered reengagement strategies and early interventions**.

- If a student shows a lack of engagement, a **Student Study Team (SST)** meeting will be promptly initiated. The SST process will identify and provide comprehensive support tailored to individual student needs.
  - Should a student become disengaged and or absent for three or more consecutive days, SST 1 will be conducted within 7 days of the disengagement. Participating members should include the teacher and community liaison to ensure all student support needs that the district can provide are being addressed, or we are connecting the family to community services to help re-engage.
  - The SST process will continue in subsequent meetings to ensure successful re-engagement.
  - If the student is still disengaged and in-person learning options are available, the district will work with the family to offer in-person learning if available.
- The LEA will facilitate a successful transition for students out of independent study and back to the traditional classroom or another educational option if satisfactory educational progress is not made or the independent study agreement is violated.

- Students with IEPs: All students with IEPs must receive the least restrictive environment to meet their individualized needs while following all FAPE requirements. Students with IEPs may receive more live instructional time but no less their their peers, depending on their individualized needs. Focus should be given to provide grade-level content and goal-oriented instruction for these students. Students requiring assistive technology must be provided with provisions for services (e.g., large screens, multiple devices, additional specialized equipment for students who are blind or have low vision, or hard of hearing). Additionally, students who may need modifications to the curriculum must also be provided modified content (this may include hard copy prints, manipulatives, and other curricular and standards instruction resources).

VII. Communication Strategies: "How Will You Hear From Us?"

Clear and consistent communication with our families and students is incredibly important, especially during school closures or emergencies.

- **ParentSquare:** Our primary platform for urgent alerts, district-wide news, and important announcements directly to your phone and email. Make sure your contact information is up-to-date with your school!
- **District Website:** Visit **arusd.org** for official updates, resources, and the most current information.
- **Google Classroom:** For students, this is your daily hub! Your teachers will post assignments, instructions, announcements, and resources here. This is also where you'll submit your work.
- **Zoom:** Your teachers will use Zoom for daily live instruction. You'll receive meeting links through Google Classroom.
- **Gmail:** Teachers and school staff will use Gmail for formal and informal correspondence with students and parents. Check your inboxes regularly for important messages.
- **Social Media and Local Media:** In major emergencies, we may also work with local news outlets and use Facebook and Instagram to share critical information.
- **Two-Way Communication:** Remember, all these platforms (**Google Classroom, Gmail, ParentSquare**) are designed for two-way communication. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out!
- In the case of ALL digital communication being down, local radio and USPS along with posted information at each school will be provided.

VIII. Standards-Aligned Curriculum & Materials

Our courses and materials are rigorously aligned to state content standards, utilizing textbooks most recently adopted by the State Board of Education or, for high school, by the LEA.

- **Lesson Plan Development:** Independent study lesson plans are standards-aligned and developed by subject matter experts.
- **Pacing & State Assessments:** The pacing of instruction ensures students cover the LEA's adopted standards-aligned curriculum, enabling them to perform well on state assessments. Students performing below "proficient" on state tests will receive additional interventions and supports.
- **Supplemental Materials:** Supplemental materials may be used to cater to individual student interests and learning styles, but no sectarian materials will be used.
- **Professional Development:** Independent study teachers participate in staff development specifically focused on state content standards to enhance instructional effectiveness.

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IX. Assessment of Student Academic Achievement

Assessment is an integral and vital element of our educational delivery. We utilize a student-level data system for frequent monitoring of academic progress and achievement.

- **Monitoring & Modification:** Teachers and the school collaboratively monitor student academic progress, using state assessment data and other measures to timely shape and modify the instructional program. Modifications are always based on individual student needs.
- **State Testing Participation:** All students participate in required state testing, unless legally exempted. The District aims for at least 95 percent student completion of state tests.

X. School Leadership & Culture

Our school leadership is knowledgeable about independent study and dedicated to maintaining it as a valued, high-quality option within the LEA.

- **Vision & Expectations:** The school leadership team provides the vision and strategies to promote high expectations and achievement for all students, fostering a positive, safe, and supportive school climate.
- **Parental & Community Involvement:** A wide range of strategies are employed to encourage parental and community involvement, including an advisory council. Parents, guardians, and caregivers are supported in their sustained interest in student performance and in creating a home environment conducive to independent learning. Their active involvement in supporting the school is highly encouraged.
- **Program Evaluation:** In collaboration with all stakeholders, the leadership team evaluates the effectiveness of the school's program, identifies areas for improvement, and implements necessary changes.
- **School Culture:** The school fosters a positive, safe, and supportive culture characterized by:
    - A learning community where staff and students care for and nurture each other, demonstrating mutual respect and appreciation.
    - Clearly stated and shared expectations for how all members of the learning community will treat one another.
    - Students feel a sense of connectedness and perceive the school environment as safe, both physically and emotionally.
    - The staff works together cooperatively and is dedicated to the excellence of the whole school.

- A shared expectation that all students will meet the goals they have set for themselves and develop their individual talents, with guidance provided to help them achieve these.

XI. Technology Readiness

The District is committed to continually strengthening technology readiness for both educators and students to seamlessly pivot between in-person and remote learning modalities.

- **Device & Connectivity Access:** The District will work diligently to ensure all students have access to appropriate devices and internet connectivity required for full participation in the educational program. This may include providing individual internet hotspot devices or loaner Chromebooks/laptops as needed.
- **Digital Backpacks:** Essential digital resources (e.g., Google Classroom, i-Ready access) will be bundled into "digital backpacks" for easy access by pupils during school closures. **These digital backpack components can be found on quick links on the ARUSD website (arusd.org) and are also accessible through the District's CLEVER app.**
- **Professional Development:** Ongoing professional development will be provided to staff to ensure effective use of all digital platforms and adherence to best practices for distance learning.

XII. Policy and Legal Framework

This plan is developed in full compliance with and references the following key legislative and regulatory frameworks:

- **California Education Code (EC):**
  - **EC Section 32282(a)(3)(A) through (D):** Mandates the inclusion of an Instructional Continuity Plan in the Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP) by July 1, 2025.
  - **EC Sections 51747 and 51749.5:** Govern Independent Study instruction modalities, requiring remote instruction to align with these standards and be substantially equivalent to classroom instruction.
  - **EC Section 32281, 32286, 32288:** Outline responsibilities for CSSP development, annual review, and adoption by the LEA, emphasizing stakeholder engagement.

    - **EC Section 53008:** Requires LEAs to screen students in kindergarten and grades one and two for risk of reading difficulties beginning in the 2025–26 school year.
    - **EC Section 46211:** Relates to Attendance Recovery programs and instructional content alignment.
- **Senate Bill 153 (Chapter 38, Statutes of 2024):** Added the ICP requirement to EC 32282.
- **Senate Bill 176 (Chapter 998, Statutes of 2024):** Amended aspects related to attendance recovery and instructional continuity.
- **CDE Guidance:** As provided at Instructional Continuity Plan Guidance and related FAQs at Instructional Continuity Plans (ICPs) - Organization.
- **Collective Bargaining Agreement:** This plan is subject to the terms and conditions outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District and the Alum Rock Educators Association (AREA).

XIII. Plan Review and Updates

This Instructional Continuity Plan will undergo an annual review and update process as an integral part of the District's Comprehensive School Safety Plan. This review will occur by March 1st of each year (EC 32286), incorporating essential stakeholder input, including from school site councils or school safety planning committees (EC 32281). An updated file of all safety-related plans and materials will be readily available for public inspection (EC 32282(d)).