

William S. Hart Union High School District

COVID-19 School Closure

March 25, 2020

(This document will be regularly updated as new information becomes available)

FAQ

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Introduction

As you are aware, due to the declared State of Emergency and the “Stay at Home Order” in California, and based upon the recommendation of the Los Angeles County Office of Education and Governor, the Hart District has closed all District schools. Beginning Monday, March 16, and currently lasting until May 5, all Hart District schools are closed to the public and to students. This closure was taken primarily as a means to maximize social distancing opportunities. In other words, it is a step taken to prevent large gatherings of people in one place in an effort to minimize the transmission of the virus. It is NOT an indication that our campuses and classrooms have been declared unsafe. The Department of Public Health (DPH) provides notification to any District when a positive diagnosis of the virus is linked to a specific school site or District facility. We have received no such notification. Should we receive a notification we would follow the guidance of DPH in closing access to and continuing rigorous site cleaning.

Questions about educating students during the closure

What are the expectations regarding educating students during the closure?

Teachers will offer instruction/activities through alternate, online formats. To begin, teachers have been encouraged to reduce the scope of their instruction to address the essential

standards. They will provide some form of virtual instruction twice per week for approximately 20 - 30 minutes (could be more or less) per lesson.

Career and College Readiness (CCR) extended day teachers will have open office hours once per week using a virtual meeting tool like Google Meet. All CCR course content will be delivered through Canvas.

How will teachers communicate with students?

Teachers will communicate with their students through the digital classroom platform. Lessons/activities will be clearly defined and office hours provided. During Friday office hours, teachers will answer questions and provide clarifying explanations in real time.

What should students do if they have no computers or internet access?

Students needing computers should contact their school site administration and can be provided a Chromebook. Free internet access can be obtained through Spectrum. Information can be found at this link: <https://www.hartdistrict.org/apps/pages/distance-learning>

How will we provide services to special populations during the closure?

All students who are able to access education through the Distance Learning modules will follow the published weekly rotating schedule of classes. Teachers will contact students through the online platform and other digital media to provide ongoing instruction. Students whose needs preclude them from accessing online education will be provided with alternatives including but not limited to hard-copy assignments, projects, consultation with family members, telehealth, or videoconferencing. General education teachers, Special Education teachers, and ancillary service providers are collaborating to create a wide variety of learning opportunities for all students.

What about dual credit classes?

COC classes will continue through an online platform. Dual credit issues need to be resolved through the college.

What resources are available for teachers?

Resources for teachers include: the Distance Learning page of the District website, teachers on special assignment, technology coordinators, department chairs, instructional coaches, site power users, and colleagues/individual teachers.

Questions about student related issues during the closure

Will grades be assigned for activities during the closure?

Assignments will be graded and grades will be incorporated into the calculations used by teachers to determine grades for progress reports and report cards. The 3rd quarter grades are due Monday, March 23. Grades will be reported by teachers and posted as previously scheduled.

What if students need access to their medication stored in the school's health office?

On Friday, March 13, all diabetic medications were sent home with the students across the District. A parent should contact the site principal to arrange for a pick-up time of other medications stored in the school's health office.

What about future field trips, athletics, extra-curriculars, etc.?

At this time, all activities are cancelled until May 5. This date could be adjusted as more information is received. If cancellations are necessary, the person responsible for arranging the activity is the point person to communicate with the venue regarding the options available.

Questions about other student support during the closure

How will we address counseling services for students with designated counselor support?

The ERICS Therapeutic Counseling Department will continue with existing counseling services for Hart District students during this temporary school closure. This includes IEP counseling services (ERICS and DIS Counseling) as well as the existing School Based Counseling (SBC) services for Hart District general education students. During this temporary school closure, counseling sessions will take place through "telehealth" that includes either telephone or video-conferencing platforms (not unlike utilizing an online format to deliver educational content). We will make efforts to ensure counseling services listed on IEPs and 504 plans that we currently service will be implemented accordingly. Therapists have been contacting families and caregivers directly via phone and/or email to coordinate sessions. To the extent that it is possible to do so, therapists have been advised to complete goal updates and other pertinent SEIS information for IEP students prior to the end of the third quarter.

Questions about state assessments and preparations during the closure

What about SAT/ACT/AP/CAASPP/Benchmark tests and exams?

Benchmark and CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress) testing have been cancelled for this year. SAT exams have been postponed through May. The College Board is developing online Advanced Placement exams. Testing date information will be available on April 3. More information and free online resources can be found at: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/about-ap/news-changes/coronavirus-update?SFMC_cid=EM288604-&rid=30601834

Questions about employees and employee expectations during closure

What are the job expectations for our teaching and salaried staff during the closure?

All certificated teachers are providing Distance Learning instruction following the District's instructional schedule, which includes Friday chat/meeting time. All certificated non-teaching employees are considered on-call and available to support District students.

What are our meeting expectations?

All school sites will be making efforts to continue with essential meetings using a virtual format. Teachers should expect guidance from site administration regarding staff meetings, professional development meetings, and department meetings (among others).

What is the expectation for staff in terms of “checking in?” (Daily check-ins via email, virtual meetings, or attending physical meetings on campus?)

All staff should check email at least daily.

What are the job expectations for certificated and classified management during the closure?

School closure days are considered work days for all management. Management should work remotely when possible, maintain contact with their departments and Cabinet, and participate in various site/District virtual meetings.

Is there a schedule of essential meetings to be held during the closure (including virtual meetings)?

When possible, principals should plan for essential meetings using technology/social distancing to ensure compliance with health department guidelines. For example:

AdCo meetings - conducted virtually, same times and dates, details to be announced

Site Cabinet meetings - at least weekly

Staff meetings - conducted virtually, details to be announced

Friday updates to families - weekly written summaries to staff and community

Instructional staff should also plan for essential meetings using technology/social distancing to ensure compliance with health department guidelines. For example:

Department meetings - conducted virtually, details to be announced

What are job expectations for principals and other campus administration during the closure?

School closure days are considered work days for administrators. Administrators should work remotely when possible, maintain contact with all site and District administration, be responsive to parent, student and staff needs, and participate in various site/District virtual meetings.

Can we have any actual face-to-face meetings with our staff?

Schools should plan to transition all meetings to a virtual format during the closure and should avoid face-to-face meetings to maximize social distancing opportunities. Sites are encouraged to explore creative alternatives to face-to-face meetings. The District Technology Department or your site administrators can provide assistance.

Should any staff or administration be on campus during the closure?

Beginning on Monday, March 23, food service will be offered in the parent drive-through in front of three schools (La Mesa, Rancho Pico, and Rio Norte).

Can employees voluntarily work on campus during the closure?

Employees may not be on campus without permission of the principal. Teachers are working remotely. Staff are only to be on campus if directed by the site principal. An administrator needs to be present if staff is working on site.

What do employees need to know about compensation/leave?

Hourly employees (excluding substitutes) will continue to receive regular, full pay and maintain the same level of health benefits. Employees on leave who are unavailable to work shall maintain the same leave status. Salaried employees (excluding substitutes) will continue to receive regular, full pay and maintain the same level of health benefits. Employees on leave who are unavailable to work shall maintain the same leave status.

How will payroll and benefits be handled?

Direct deposit will continue. For those without direct deposit, checks will be mailed to their home. Further details will be provided prior to each payday via District email. Payroll staff is working on a modified schedule. Should you have questions, please contact Brittany Kruczynski or Ralph Peschek at ext. 242.

Medical, dental, and other self-elected benefits will continue for classified, certificated, and management. If you have benefits issues during the shutdown, please contact Brittany Kruczynski or Ralph Peschek at ext. 242.

Questions about facilities usage during the closure

How will we handle currently scheduled facility rentals or facility usage by other entities during the closure?

Outside users of Hart District facilities have been notified that those facilities are not available to them during the closure.

How will we handle deliveries during the closure?

Procurement has been working to review any pending deliveries to the warehouse. We are communicating to vendors specific dates and times the warehouse will be open to receive deliveries. Mail will be delivered to sites on Tuesdays between 9:00-11:00 am. Supply deliveries will be scheduled on Thursdays, only as needed.

Questions about the closure (general)

Will we extend the school year?

We do not anticipate adjusting the school year calendar.

How is District leadership staying informed on the issues of the closure from state and local education and emergency services agencies?

Leadership is in regular contact with/monitoring briefings from the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the California Department of Education, the Governor, and local law enforcement

agencies. In addition, District leadership regularly convenes virtually with other school district leaders in the Santa Clarita Valley.

Have all vendors and service providers been notified of closure?

The following regularly scheduled services have been notified that service is temporarily not needed: Waste Management, Postage One, the District's uniform service provider, and LA Conservation Corp.

Questions regarding communications

How will the District Office communicate with stakeholders?

Parents/families should expect regular (weekly) updates from the District Office through the Blackboard Connect message system. If you are not receiving these messages, please contact your site administration for assistance.

How will site administration communicate with stakeholders?

Parents/families should expect regular (weekly) updates from site leadership through the Blackboard Connect message system. If you are not receiving these messages, please contact your site administration for assistance.

Site administration will maintain communication with their staff through virtual staff/department/leadership meetings and weekly updates.

Questions regarding Special Education

According to the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, school districts have significant latitude and authority to take necessary actions to protect the health, safety, and welfare of students and school staff. School officials have discretion to make educational decisions based on local health needs and concerns. As school leaders respond to evolving conditions related to coronavirus, they will continue to ensure that all students are able to study and learn in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination.

How will Special Education students receive their statutory services while at home?

While in-class instruction may be the ideal educational environment for most students, the US Department of Education and California Department of Education recognize that the use of distance learning as a contingency plan during emergency circumstances allows schools to provide equal access to the greatest extent possible for all students. Therefore, service providers will provide service in the manner most appropriate for each student under these unique circumstances. Counseling and speech services may be provided telephonically or through video conferencing. Other services such as occupational therapy and behavior intervention may be provided through weekly consultations, assigned activities for family members to perform with students, video learning, and other alternative means.

Food service resources for students

Will we provide meals for free and reduced students during the closure?

The Hart District and elementary districts are coordinating efforts to provide meals for students during the closure.

What are the logistical decisions for providing these meals?

The Hart District has received approval from the California Department of Education to open drive-up feeding locations at three sites. The elementary districts are planning to open eleven feeding sites. We are coordinating efforts to assure that all attendance boundaries have a minimum of one feeding location. We will be evaluating participation on a daily basis.

How will this accommodate “social distancing”?

These will be drive-up sites offering a grab and go meals.

When will meals be available?

At the Hart District sites (La Mesa, Rancho Pico, and Rio Norte), grab and go breakfasts and lunches will be available Monday through Friday, March 23-April 10, noon to 1:00 pm.

What students have access to these meals?

All children 18 years and under may receive a free breakfast and lunch daily. Any child that meets this age criteria may access any of the 14 sites for a free meal. Enrollment is not a factor. Homeschool, charter, elementary, junior high and high school students will have access to any of the 14 locations.

How will parents and students be notified?

A Districtwide announcement was sent out via Blackboard Connect. The District website is updated with locations and serving times.

What are the locations?

Santa Clarita Elementary - 27177 Seco Canyon Rd., Saugus, CA 91350
Cedar creek Elementary - 27792 Camp Plenty Rd., Canyon Country, CA 91351
Rio Vista Elementary - 20417 Cedar creek St., Canyon Country, CA 91351
Newhall Elementary - 24607 Walnut St., Newhall, CA 91321
Peachland Elementary - 24800 Peachland Ave., Santa Clarita, CA 91321
Wiley Canyon Elementary - 24240 W La Glorita Cir., Newhall, CA 91321
Dr. J. Michael McGrath Elementary - 21501 Deputy Jake Dr., Newhall, CA 91321
Canyon Springs Community Elementary - 19059 Vicci St., Santa Clarita, CA 91351
Mitchell Community Elementary - 16821 Goodvale Rd., Canyon Country, CA 91387
Live Oak Elementary - 27715 Saddleridge Way, Castaic, CA 91384
Northlake Hills Elementary - 32545 Ridge Rte. Rd., Castaic, CA 91384
Rancho Pico JHS - 26250 Valencia Blvd., Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381
La Mesa JHS - 26623 May Way, Santa Clarita, CA 91351
Rio Norte JHS - 28771 Rio Norte Dr., Valencia, CA 91354

Other Questions

How can campus resource officers be used to support school sites and student during the closure?

Unless the Sheriff's Department is put into emergency operations, the SROs will still be serving our schools. Therefore, if a student is in crisis, a site administrator can call the cell phone number of their SRO instead of calling 911. SROs may go to the student's home to complete a risk assessment. SROs will also be asked to conduct regular walk-arounds on campuses to communicate a presence, to deter vandalism, and to be able to report any concerns to site or District administration.

How does a student obtain a work permit?

Joelle Nelson will issue work permits remotely to students, by appointment only. Students can make an appointment by emailing her at jonelson@hartdistrict.org.

Is the DCC open?

The DCC is currently open and processing jobs. This is a contracted service. The service may close at a future date due to a lack of work.