



WELCOME BACK!

SAVE THE DATE! Zoom Parent Webinar | Thursday, August 20 @ 7PM

We have scheduled an introductory **Parent Zoom Webinar** on **Thursday August 20 at 7:00 PM**.

The webinar is designed to help parents learn how we will be using Zoom throughout your child's virtual school day. Much of what we've learned about streaming live instruction this summer indicates that educating the parents is critical for a successful program.

Registration details are coming soon, and **we encourage all interested families to register** in order to automatically receive a recording of the session (even if you are unable to attend during the live event).



Dear Bel Aire Families,

Welcome back (almost) to the 2020-2021 school year! I hope all of you were able to find some time to relax over the summer and are preparing for our new first day of school: **Monday, August 24.**

The summer has presented us all with continual shifts in health trends and local guidance. Those of you following Dr. Lynch's messages and the summer Board of Trustee meetings, are already familiar with the far reaching impact of these shifts on our back-to-school planning.

In fact, there is an overwhelming amount of information to share. To support everyone's understanding of the information, I am going to try to narrow the focus of *this* message to **Phase 1 information** (including Phase 1 sample student schedules and FAQs), but I will include plenty of links for those of you wanting to learn about additional details - of which there are many!

It has become abundantly clear that there are a lot of conflicting opinions about how and when schools should re-open. We believe that our current plans reflect a very thoughtful approach to provide the safest, highest quality education possible for RUSD students within the constraints inherent with a global pandemic.

While there will be many unusual circumstances about this year's start of school, I encourage families to begin purposefully spreading excitement about a virtual return to school on August 24. As always, our students are taking cues from the adults they love, as they process their current realities. We can fill them with fear, and anger, and anxiety, or we can try to set them up for a more positive experience with messages of hope, and safety, and new possibilities.

We understand that there remains a lot of uncertainty. We will continue to be reflective and responsive to the shifting landscape and family feedback. Stay safe, and please start sharing some excitement for the 2020-2021 school year with you child(ren)!

Sincerely,
Lexie Cala
Principal



PHASE 1 OVERVIEW

Overview: RUSD 5 Phase Plan to Resume Classroom Learning

RUSD recently received trustee approval for the first two phases of a **5 Phase School Re-Entry Plan** for the 2020-2021 school year. We will move through the five phases following criteria outlined in our [5 Phase School Re-Entry Plan](#) (aligned with [county health guidance](#) and the [state's guidelines for classroom learning](#)).

Phase 1 will begin on **August 24**, and this message will focus on Phase 1 details. Interested families can read more about *Phase 2* using links included toward the end of this message.

Phase 1: Distance Learning Overview

Along with [other Marin County districts](#), RUSD will begin with a full, distance learning program. Please note that the new first day of school has moved from Thursday, August 20, to Monday, August 24. We do not have a clear end date for Phase 1, but we know that it will not be sooner than September 8, and that we have to be off the state's COVID-10 monitoring list for at least 14 days.

Phase 1 is designed to simulate a typical classroom experience - as much as is possible when students are learning from home. Students have a heavily structured day with designated start and end times (and this is consistent across the 5 days)

Each day, students are scheduled for five (5) 45-minute learning blocks.

All five (5) learning blocks are directed by a certificated teacher (except one block on Monday afternoon).

Four (4) learning blocks (three on Monday) are designated as [Certificated Learning Blocks](#), and one (1) learning block is designated as a Certificated [Specialist Learning Block](#).

Over the course of the week, students will receive exactly one live, synchronous lesson in: music, Spanish, art, PE, and a library lesson. *Note: Core content will be integrated into Specialist lessons.

Monday's fifth learning block is designated as a supported, but [Independent Learning Block](#).



PHASE 1 FAQs

Can families expect a model that is similar to last spring's distance learning (DL)?

No. While we remain proud of efforts last spring, we know our plan did not meet the needs of many families. Our new distance learning (DL) program is very different. We have learned a lot about running a remote school, and we have listened to parent feedback and reflected upon the experience ourselves. In this sense, you can expect a very different experience beginning August 24.

What is the daily experience for students during Phase 1?

In our new DL model, the student day is designed to run similarly to that of an in-person, classroom day - but from the child's home. Instead of providing students a menu of learning activities, and a mostly asynchronous experience, the new DL plan is heavily structured, with an emphasis on synchronous (virtual, but live) learning experiences.

What is the Phase 1 weekly student schedule?

Below is a *SAMPLE* schedule. The subjects listed and the placement of the [Specialist Learning Blocks](#) will vary for each cohort. Much of what is included in the sample will be consistent for all students:

daily start and end times (9:00 - 1:45)

five (5) [Specialist Learning Blocks](#) (with integrated core content) throughout the week (generally it works out to be exactly one per day)

four (4) [Certificated Learning Blocks](#) on Monday, and five (5) [Certificated Learning Blocks](#) Tuesday - Friday

one (1) [Independent Learning Block](#) on Monday afternoon.

For definitions of the various types of learning blocks, please click the links embedded in the text above. I imagine that the details are difficult to fully understand in abstraction, but I am confident that understandings will clarify when families receive individualized, student schedules from their teachers at the end of next week.

SAMPLE Distance Learning Schedule				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00-9:45 Certificated Learning Block: MATH	9:00 - 9:45 Certificated Specialist Block: ART	9:00-9:45 Certificated Learning Block: MATH	9:00-9:45 Certificated Learning Block: MATH	9:00-9:45 Certificated Learning Block: MATH
9:45-10:30 Certificated Learning Block: READING	9:45-10:30 Certificated Learning Block: READING	9:45 - 10:30 Certificated Specialist Block: PE	9:45-10:30 Certificated Learning Block: READING	9:45-10:30 Certificated Learning Block: READING
BREAK				
10:45-11:30 Certificated Specialist Block: MUSIC	10:45-11:30 Certificated Learning Block: MATH	10:45 - 11:30 Certificated Learning Block: READING	10:45 - 11:30 Certificated Learning Block: WRITING	10:45 - 11:30 Certificated Learning Block: WRITING
11:30 - 12:15 Certificated Learning Block: WRITING	11:30 - 12:15 Certificated Learning Block: WRITING	11:30 - 12:15 Certificated Learning Block: WRITING	11:30 - 12:15 Certificated Specialist Block: LIBRARY	11:30-12:15 Certificated Learning Block: SCIENCE
LUNCH				
1:00 - 1:45 Independent Learning Block	1:00 - 1:45 Certificated Learning Block: SOCIAL STUDIES	1:00 - 1:45 Certificated Learning Block: SCIENCE	1:00 - 1:45 Certificated Learning Block: SOCIAL STUDIES	1:00 - 1:45 Certificated Specialist Block: SPANISH

The spring distance learning plan was really hard for parents. Should we plan for a similar experience?

There will remain a component of parent engagement required for a successful distance learning experience, but we have tried to mitigate heavy parent oversight in the following ways:

Ongoing, Daily Teacher Interaction & Guidance:

24 of the 25 learning blocks will be guided by a certificated teacher. Most learning blocks will begin with *whole-group* instruction or direction. Teachers may then move between smaller, virtual groups of students (similar to a teacher's physical movement through a classroom), but all students will have clear guidance, opportunities to ask questions, and the understanding that teachers will be following-up with their progress.

Structured Daily Schedules & Attendance:

Students have a consistent start and end time each day, and attendance will be taken. We hope this will help support a consistent learning schedule that students understand and take responsibility for following.

Special Education & Intervention Services:

Students in Special Education and Intervention programs will have more regular, scheduled, individualized support.

Streamlined Technology:

We have been very thoughtful about how to use technology as a support and not as a source of frustration.

We are preparing a system in which students can enter the virtual classroom via Zoom once at 9:00am each morning, and stay connected to the same virtual room until the end of the school day. This eliminates the need to navigate multiple meeting links. When a Specialist takes over instruction for one of the five learning periods, we are preparing to have that specialist run the lesson from the same zoom link so students don't have to "leave their virtual room."

If a student is assigned to a particular learning app or other online learning experience, the teacher will be initially present to help kids navigate the transition.

We felt like our student needed more core, academic support. Is there a plan for that?

Yes! We have a layered approach to increasing student support:

Students will be engaging in daily, live instruction with their classroom teachers and with specialists. This will support students in receiving more opportunity for guided content coverage as well as an increase in real-time support and feedback.

Specialists are currently working on an instructional design that blends their incredible specialist content with core content support!

In addition, we think the heavily structured, teacher-guided, certificated learning blocks will support a significant increase in content coverage and understanding.

Our student usually receives special education support or Tier II student intervention supports. Will these be available?

Yes. We are currently building these schedules into the daily schedules. These supports require some detailed scheduling and training with our support staff, so we anticipate rolling these services out very early, but **after** the first week of school. In Phase 1, these virtual support services will be regularly scheduled into the student's school day. In Phase 2, we are trying to schedule services to align with *Independent Learning Blocks*. Special Education

teachers and our Interventional Specialist will oversee family communication with more specific details.

What should we do with our school-issued iPad?

At this time, families can keep their school-issued iPad, with the expectation that students bring the iPad with them upon return to in-person instruction.

How will we get other supplies and materials for distance learning?

We are currently working on grade-level specific supply packages that will include essential learning materials like student workbooks and general school supplies. We will be sharing a specific time and location for families to pick these items up on Thursday, August 20 or Friday, August 21. **Please note that we expect students to bring all school-provided materials back to school with them, when it is safe to return to campus.**

Can we request specific pairings of students to help coordinate scheduling and family “bubbling”?

School teams of teachers, administrators, and support staff collaborate to create balanced classes. Careful attention is given to class size, gender ratio, individual student learning needs and styles, academic proficiency, social emotional needs, and leadership skills. The overarching goal is to create the most optimal learning environment for all students. In addition, this year class placement includes coordinating assigned cohort *start* and *end* times with families with multiple students in a single school and those with children across multiple school sites. Given the complexity of this process and the need to carefully consider the aforementioned factors, we are not able to accommodate parent requests to place students together based on enrollment in outside learning pods, summer camps or other social groups.

When will families find out about our child’s teacher assignment?

Families can expect to receive information about their child’s teacher on **Friday, August 21**. We will begin sending class information at noon on Friday, but please understand that **it may take up to three hours for families to receive the messages**. Please only message us with concerns if you haven’t received anything by the evening hours. Along with the news of your child’s assigned teacher, you can expect to receive details about the *weekly schedule* and a short, introductory *video* from your child’s teacher. As a reminder, the class placement process is extra complicated this year, and we cannot accommodate any parent requests.

How will my child establish a connection with his/her teacher or peers if we begin virtually?

This is one of the most important considerations for our talented instructional team. We are placing a great emphasis on establishing and maintaining relationships and connectedness.

While we can't replicate all that is possible in a physical classroom experience, our incredible team of teachers are preparing high-quality, high-impact, social-emotional supports.

Will daily (virtual) attendance be recorded this year?

Yes, teachers will be taking attendance daily, so students need to arrive **on time** to their virtual classroom via the Zoom link coming. In Phase 1, virtual school begins promptly at 9:00am.



PHASE 2: PREVIEW

Phase 2 is a hybrid model that integrates distance learning with 2 days a week of in-person learning. We will share more details when we have a clearer sense of the timeline, but for families who want a *preview* of Phase 2, here are additional resources

[Phase 2 Sample Student Schedule](#)

[Phase 2 Split-Cohort Rationale](#)

[Stable Cohorts](#)

[New In-Person Arrival & Departure Protocol](#)

[General Health & Safety Protocols](#)

[New Classroom Safety Protocols](#)

[New Lunch & Recess Protocols](#)

[Campus & Facilities Changes](#)

[Virtual Special Education Services](#)

[Communication Practices](#)



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