



IMPORTANT DATES

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MONDAY, AUGUST 31

6:00 - 6:45 | Bel Aire Virtual Back to School Night (*please details below*)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

9AM | 2020-2021 PTA Kick-Off Meeting

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

5PM & 6:30PM | MCOE Parent Ed Event • [Introduction to Google Classroom](#) (*register here*)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

LABOR DAY | No School

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PRINCIPAL MESSAGE | WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2020

Dear Bel Aire Families,

Thank you for your remarkable support and patience during an unusual, virtual return to school.

Bel Aire teachers report a successful start to the year with enthusiastic students joining their virtual classrooms on time and ready to learn each day! This is a testament of course, to all of *you*, their engaged parents and caregivers. We know that in these early days of the school year, your children are not waking on their own, proactively preparing for the day, independently reporting to their designated work stations, and logging into their virtual learning spaces without assistance. We know that they are prompt and prepared because of *you*. As a parent of a six year old, I understand the challenges that come with a child participating in a distance learning program. It is no small task. Thank you.

I would also like to acknowledge our incredible team at Bel Aire. I cannot overstate how hard-working, how invested, and how talented and capable our staff is. Our Bel Aire team (and this includes our teachers and our support staff) have risen to a series of new challenges and shifting directives with flexibility, creative thought, and an unwavering commitment to our students. We had our own version of first day jitters, and we can empathize with the frustrations that come with unpredictable technology. We worked hard to prepare for a smooth transition into synchronous, virtual instruction, only to receive the news that our primary instructional platform wasn't working on the morning of our first day of school!

Our Phase 1 model is new for all of us, but it's a collaborative response from a thoughtful team of educators who are deeply invested in supporting our students. And while a robust distance learning model doesn't align with my original schema of school, I continue to redirect my perspective and look for the new opportunities that accompany any unfamiliar experience. Returning Bel Aire families may recall the "*Look for the Good*" project I introduced last spring. Please join me in continuing with this work. There is 'good' to be found.

Thank you again for your support.

With appreciation,

Lexie Cala

Principal



ADDITIONAL UPDATES & REMINDERS

IMPORTANT | DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

I know how difficult it is to keep up with all of the information flooding our email inboxes, but **digital communication is our primary tool for sharing information with our families.** Toward that end, I hope that all of us can reinvest in carving out *10 minutes* every other week to read these important newsletters. To honor your time, I will continue to break up content with headlines to allow parents to skim through less relevant or repeated content, but please take a peak at these biweekly messages.



NEW DETAILS | VIRTUAL BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT

Your child's teacher will be sharing details with you about their virtual classroom event. Typically we join together in the MPR, I talk for a little too long, and I introduce families to our entire teaching team, our PTA, and the Foundation. This year's back-to-school night will be a smaller event with a narrower focus. We're eliminating the full community gathering and limiting the event to a **45 minute teacher presentation.**

We anticipate a higher volume of parent questions this year. We want to answer these questions, but ask that parents respectfully take the teacher's lead and follow the prepared presentation. To support a successful experience for all, we are asking parents to understand the following:

Arrive on Time. Please make every effort to join the meeting on time; consider joining 5-10 minutes early so that you may troubleshoot any tech issues.

Virtual Waiting Rooms. You will be initially directed to a virtual waiting room, and the teacher will let you into the meeting promptly at 6:00. (If you join the meeting after 6:00,

you will need to be prepared to wait until the teacher can take a break from his or her presentation and let you in).

Stay Muted. Please remain muted for the entirety of the presentation. Even subtle background noise can be very distracting to the presenters and other participants.

Turn Your Camera on. If you can, keeping your camera on is helpful for teachers, as they begin to establish relationships.

Use Your Child's Device. If you use your child's device, it should be relatively easy to connect with your teacher's personal Zoom link, AND the teacher will see your child's name with your image to help connect parents and students.

Focus on Learning. As always, the focus of teacher presentations will remain on curriculum, instruction, and expectations; we will have many opportunities to talk about the logistics of distance learning with parents, but Back-to-School Night is not the most appropriate venue for that

Use the Chat Feature. If you have a question that is relevant to the entire group, you can submit it using the chat feature on Zoom. If you are unable to use the Chat feature in Zoom, you are welcome to email the teacher directly with any questions.

Avoid Child-Specific Inquiries. Please remember that personal questions, or specific inquiries about your child are not appropriate topics for back to school night.

Unanswered Questions. Your teacher may or may not have time to respond to all questions, but will save the chat transcript so that we may properly address unanswered questions after the event

Multiple Bel Aire Students. If you have more than one student at Bel Aire, consider using each child's device to log into each teacher's Zoom presentation before 6:00 pm. You can toggle between the teacher presentations. If you use a single device, please understand you may not be granted access when you attempt to join the middle of an ongoing presentation.



While Back to School Night isn't the best venue for answering parent questions, we want to help you find the answers we need.

Generally, we recommend parents begin by reaching out to their child's teacher. This is especially true for situations that are specific and personal. The teacher will know if office staff, the principal, or others should be included.

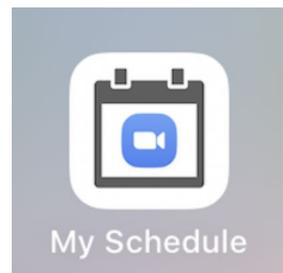
Additionally, Bel Aire's support staff is reaching out to make individual calls to all of our families to gather more feedback (which can include parent questions). Their role is not necessarily to answer all questions during the call, but they are forwarding questions to appropriate people. I will try to include responses to common and non-specific inquiries in upcoming newsletters.



PRIVATE LEARNING PODS

We appreciate the added sacrifice and extra efforts families are putting forth to support their children during distance learning. Some families have invested in learning pods that use parents or hired educators to support learning from home. This makes a lot of sense for many families as a supplement to our district program, but we can't customize our program to accommodate the various pods. (Incidentally, there is a county-based 'learning hub' program shared below if you're interested)

RUSD students are required to participate fully in our district programs, and we are unable to modify class schedules and lessons for pods. District employees are ultimately accountable for their students, their instruction, and their learning. We appreciate your understanding that customized accommodations for families and pods is not possible.



NEW | DAILY SCHEDULES LOADED ON YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL IPAD

This week, our incredible technical support team sent an icon (see image to left) to your child's **district iPad** this week with their weekly schedule! Click on the icon to see the weekly schedule, and double tap links to launch virtual Zoom classrooms! If you are using a *district iPad*, but don't see the icon, please reach out to help@reedschools.org for assistance.



OPPORTUNITY | MARIN COMMUNITY LEARNING HUBS

Please see this message from Marin county's Deputy Superintendent, Terena Mares: Many local community organizations are working together to provide **Marin Community Learning Hubs** during the 2020-21 school year. Marin Community Learning Hubs are safe spaces with adult supervision for TK-8th grade students. Students will receive connection support for distance learning and access to WiFi during school hours. This opportunity is offered for families for **FREE** who meet specific criteria.

[English Flyer](#) | [Spanish Flyer](#)

Eligible families qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, work with the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS), foster youth, newcomers, families unable to access or support distance learning, siblings, and those with special circumstances.

[Click here to complete an Interest Survey.](#) | [Haga clic aquí para completar una encuesta de interés.](#)

You can also complete a paper copy of the Interest Survey at your child's school. If you have questions or would like support in completing the survey, please contact your school or email learninghubs@marinschools.org.



PARENT RESOURCES | VIRTUAL SCHOOL SUPPORT

Below are some resources shared during recent meetings and in welcome-back emails. In the coming weeks, I will share a more organized repository of parent resources for easy reference.

[Zoom Tutorial Video for Students and Parents](#)

[Family Guide for Virtual School](#)

[Tips for Parents for Supporting Distance Learning at Home](#)

[Parent Distance Learning Orientation webinar recording](#)



ADDITIONAL PARENT RESOURCES | MCOE PARENT WORKSHOPS

The Marin County SELPA is hosting a series of workshops specifically for parents this fall. Details regarding workshop topics and registration information is included below.

The Power of Play in a High Tech World

August 31, 2020 from 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

This workshop will provide clinically relevant activities and strategies to create functional learning opportunities that promote cognitive, physical, social emotional and language development in the natural environment. **Registration required** - Register [here](#).

I've Got a Feeling: Raising Comfort Levels Working with Emotions

October 26, 2020 from 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

This workshop will building an understanding of emotional development in students with social learning challenges, explore visual supports to facilitate work on feelings, and provide specific suggestions to expanding emotional vocabulary and teaching about social relationships. **Registration required** - Register [here](#).

Keep Talking! Narrative Development for Language and Social Learning

December 7, 2020 from 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

This workshop will provide information, tips, and sample visual supports to use with elementary through high school students, focus on how adults can mediate social learning and language successfully, review basic conversational choices, and examine how students can practice these skills using topics that are most interest to them. **Registration required** - Register [here](#).



BEL AIRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTA

2020•2021 PTA Kick Off Meeting, Wednesday September 2, 9:00 am

Please join us for our first virtual PTA meeting of the 2020/21 school year! All PTA members who are current on their dues may attend the meeting. Bring your own coffee and join us!

Join [Bel Aire PTA Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 853 9190 9825

Passcode: 102524

Additionally, if you would like to join our volunteer list to learn of opportunities as they become available, please email [Allison Hart](#), Bel Aire PTA Site Chair.



RUSD DISTRICT PTA

Join the PTA | Your participation makes a difference now more than ever. Membership dues support student enrichment, community building events, parent education, virtual and in-person assemblies, teacher appreciation, performing arts and more! [Find out more and become a PTA member here.](#)

Purchase Spirit Wear | Support the PTA and show your school spirit with spirit wear! [Order fun gear for your student here.](#)

