



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2020



PRINCIPAL MESSAGE

Dear Bel Aire Families,

Classroom Visits

Ordinarily, my favorite part of any school day, is when I force myself away from my desk and take a little tour through classrooms. A student-free school campus feels strange, and it eliminates the possibility for me to casually pop in to a classroom room and ask a student what they're learning or to share weekend highlights with kids at recess. Crashing a teacher's virtual zoom classroom feels a little less casual, and more like a distraction or an interruption. So, I begged Mrs. Rhodes, to let me join her during her Library class rotation for an entire week. *This has been a soul-filling experience.*



Returning to In-Person Learning

Speaking of empty classrooms, you have probably read about new guidelines, new criteria, a new blueprint, a new four-tiered system, new case rates, and new anticipated return dates for schools. As Superintendent Lynch mentioned in last week's Headline News, it is possible we can begin to bring students on to campus within the month, but we don't have a date. We were expecting Marin County to move into Tier 2 yesterday, but that did not happen. I know details and dates are important. I want them as well. For now, please continue checking your messages for new updates as we have them.

RUSD 5 Phase School Re-Entry Plan & Phase 2 Preview

As a reminder, RUSD has adopted a [5 Phase School Re-Entry Plan](#) for the 2020-2021 school year. Phase 2 is a hybrid, split-cohort, alternate day model. I will be honest that it is not the easiest model to run, but its purpose is to allow for a slow re-entry to in-person learning, and bridge the 100% distance learning model from Phase 1 with and a fuller return to in-person learning in Phase 3. The details are ready for sharing, but I will wait until we have established a return date, to elaborate too much on Phase 2. Below are the primary highlights of the Phase 2 model;

VIRTUAL MONDAYS

Monday will remain a virtual, at-home learning day for all students.

SPLIT COHORTS

Each current classroom of students, will be divide into two cohorts. We are currently trying to coordinate sibling schedules within each school and across the three schools. Then we will be balancing classes and sharing cohort assignments. As always, we anticipate parents have compelling reasons for needing one cohort vs the other, but we simply cannot accommodate these requests in our already complicated process.

ALTERNATE DAYS

Cohort A will be attending school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Cohort B will be attending school on Thursdays and Fridays. Students will engage distance learning from home on their alternate days.

DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning on Tuesday - Friday will run differently than the Monday program (and our current distance learning program) because the classroom teacher will not be available while he/she is teaching the split cohort inside the classroom. There will still be daily live, synchronous engagement for students at home however that will include:

a virtual class meeting at the start of the day with the classroom teacher and the cohort on campus

a synchronous learning session with their teacher at the end of the day

1-3 scheduled live, virtual specialist lessons (for a total of four over the two at-home days) that will include core content support

scheduled, live, **virtual student support sessions** for qualifying students; (Look for schedules from Special Education support staff and see note below about *Academic Workshops*)

the remaining learning blocks will be structured by the classroom teacher with clear assignments for students to complete during **Independent Learning Blocks**

STAGGERED START/END TIMES

Students will be arriving and exiting campus at different times to limit close contact between students from other cohorts. The times will be shared with families soon.

DESIGNATED ENTRY/EXIT “GATES” ONTO CAMPUS

While Bel Aire doesn't have actual, physical gates, we will be using **three** (3) entry/exit locations which will be assigned to students based upon their grade level. We understand that some families will have to travel to more than one location to drop off and pick up their siblings. While inconvenient, we are required to follow the safety protocol in our county-approved *School Site Specific Protection Plan*, and limiting the mixing of cohorts upon entry and exit is one such protocol. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in this required inconvenience.

Again, I will elaborate on additional details soon, but for families who want more details now, here are additional resources:

[Phase 2 Sample Student Schedule](#)

[Phase 2 Split-Cohort Rationale](#)

[Stable Cohorts](#)

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

[General Health & Safety Protocols](#)

[New Classroom Safety Protocols](#)

[New Lunch & Recess Protocols](#)

[Campus & Facilities Changes](#)

[Virtual Special Education Services](#)

[Communication Practices](#)

Thank you again for your support. This has been an incredibly smooth start to an extraordinary school year.

Sincerely,
Lexie Cala
Principal



ADDITIONAL UPDATES & REMINDERS

ExDL UPDATES

We are very close to establishing a long-term, high-quality replacement program for our ExDL learners. I continue to appreciate everyone's extraordinary patience, flexibility, and understanding as we work to repair a difficult situation. Last Friday, I shared the criteria we are using to evaluate potential programs, and Dr. Artis provided families with additional details and protocols to help us get through an extra challenging time. I acknowledge that an abrupt programmatic change without a ready replacement has been excessively challenging, and hope you can trust that we remain steadfast in our commitment to provide a high-quality alternative program for our ExDL families.



ACADEMIC WORKSHOPS

We plan to launch our Academic Workshops on September 21 for students participating in all Bel Aire programs. Academic Workshops provide targeted intervention support to qualifying students. This program takes a few weeks to establish, as we have to identify student levels via a specific, 1:1 assessment. Our instructional support staff were trained in the assessment process this week, and will begin assessing students next week. If your child qualifies for the additional support, we will share more information about this program prior to September 21. If you do not hear from us, then your child is meeting grade-level expectations!



PLEASE DO NOT FILM OR RECORD VIRTUAL LESSONS

It has come to our attention that some parents and students are filming or taking pictures of Zoom sessions. Please understand that among other things, doing so violates our requirement to protect student confidentiality. It is not permissible to record or screen-shot virtual classrooms without prior consent from all parties (staff and parents).



PREPARING STUDENTS FOR DISTRACTION-FREE SUCCESS

RECOMMENDATION:

Use of Student Headphones

As students turn off mute to respond to questions and/or participate in discussions, background noise from homes and other learning environments enters the classroom learning environment. While some background noise is to be expected, some classrooms are experiencing excessive background noise. Encouraging your child to use headphones will help foster a quieter classroom environment.

RECOMMENDATION:

Use of Bel Aire Virtual Backgrounds

It is also important to be mindful of the background that appears in your child’s camera. Try to position cameras away from family televisions and/or other visual distractions. Alternatively, please consider helping your child use a Bel Aire Virtual Background. ([Virtual Background Images linked here](#)).



STAY SAFE

In order to return to in-person learning as soon as possible, we need families to continue to practice social distancing and take other protective measures like frequent hand washing and wearing a face covering. As difficult as it is, we also ask families to limit social engagements that result in prolonged exposure with others. As we prepare to return to school, these practices are more important than ever. And they will continue to be imperative in order to continue building toward a full return to school and avoid a need to return to distance learning.

We are confident that we have all of the necessary safety measures in place to protect our students while we are at school, and we need families to continue with safe practices outside of school so that we can maintain a safe campus for all.



BEL AIRE CAMPUS REMAINS CLOSED DURING SCHOOL HOURS

We love seeing some of our students visit campus because we miss them so much! But, unfortunately, we have to turn them away during school hours. School campuses are closed to visitors during school hours. This is in effect during distance learning as well as once we transition to in-person learning. The campus is open to the community on weekends and after school hours.



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FROM THE BEL AIRE PTA



BEL AIRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTA

SPIRIT WEAR

Have your child show off their school spirit, even if they aren't yet attending in person!
Bel Aire sweatshirts, sweatpants and PJs are available to be ordered online.

Click [HERE](#) to order.



FROM THE DISTRICT PTA



[PLEASE CLICK HERE TO JOIN OUR PTA](#)



JOIN THE PTA TODAY!

**YOUR PARTICIPATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE
NOW MORE THAN EVER**

\$30 PER FAMILY
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MEMBERSHIP DUES SUPPORT STUDENT ENRICHMENT,
COMMUNITY BUILDING EVENTS, PARENT EDUCATION,
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