



# Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)  
Edition #27 – Week of October 12, 2020

*Questions are quoted as I received them directly from our community.*

- 1. Is it possible to get Google Hangouts turned back on, at least to allow students and teachers to message each other? This was a really helpful tool. It allowed students who were not comfortable answering or asking questions in the general chat the opportunity to still connect with their teachers. It is also a helpful tool for breakout rooms, students spend too much time popping in and out of their group to ask questions, whereas with Hangouts they were able to just quickly send a message and I could pop in on their group. I can imagine what might have led to them being turned off, however for me, as a middle school teacher, this was a tool that I used multiple times a day, that I believe deeply benefited some of the more reserved students that are struggling the most with distance learning.**

We recognize the benefits of Google Hangouts, but unfortunately, in order to abide by the Child Internet Protection Act, and student data privacy laws, school districts cannot provide accounts in communication systems to be used for non-academic purposes. PVUSD must do everything possible to make sure that students are using district provided resources appropriately (for academic purposes) and in a safe manner. Currently, Google does not provide a way for district and school administration to monitor Google Chat or to configure it for strictly Teacher/Student communication. PVUSD technology staff are in the process of evaluating other instant communication systems that may be implemented for academic purposes with the needed oversight built in. While other potential solutions are being researched by PVUSD, one possibility to consider is to let students know that during synchronous learning sessions, and especially during break-out sessions that you will continue to monitor new messages coming into your email and ask students to send a quick email with any questions that come up during the lesson when they do not feel comfortable using the general chat.

- 2. The tech hours to get equipment serviced or replaced are 9-12 M/W/F. Has there been consideration to make tech hours more convenient to families? Our students are on class meets 9:00-1:00 and many have parents who are working during the day. Could there be an early morning and/or late afternoon time for this service at least one day a week? It would be much more convenient for families and many more students would benefit! Thank you for your time.**

When a student/parent or teacher is in need of technical support or a Chromebook repair/replacement, but is unable to come to the Technology Support Drive-Through on MWF 9am-12pm at Rolling Hills Middle for any reason, they should call their school main

number and speak to the school's office staff to arrange a drive-up or walk-up appointment at the school that their child attends. School office staff will work with the Site Technology Support Technician assigned to each school to provide support for these scheduled appointments. They will make sure that students have a functioning device for distance learning activities. Parents, students, and staff should also first call the technology support hotline at 786-8324 to speak to a technician. PVUSD Technicians can often resolve device issues over the phone unless the device is physically broken.

**3. What is PVUSD doing, in conjunction with the SC County Health Department, to secure rapid tests so that we can roll out a testing program and get our kids back in school after Winter Break?**

PVUSD in collaboration with Santa Cruz County Office of Education and Stanford University, approved a Memorandum of Understanding on October 14, 2020 that will allow the school district to provide surveillance testing to all staff every two months as required by current guidelines. We are also working on the final operational details so that we can begin the surveillance testing with staff who are working on site within the next month and be prepared for a return in January if health conditions and related criteria for reopening are met.

**4. If the Santa Cruz County Office of Education has partnered with Stanford Medicine to provide COVID-19 testing to all essential school personnel on an ongoing basis at no cost to the employee, what is PVUSD/SC County Office of Education doing to provide this testing to the students?**

Currently there is no requirement for students to be tested and we cannot require them to be tested. We are looking into solutions to be able to provide testing to asymptomatic students who need the test for a variety of reasons such as a close contact with a confirmed positive case or a member of a quarantined cohort.

**5. What is the current procedure for families who visit sites for meetings? Is there a screening protocol they must complete? Are masks required for all family members even young children? If they are exhibiting symptoms such as a cough while on site, what is the procedure? If families just stop by a school site, should they be directed to a screening area during this time of distance learning?**

At the present time do not have in-person meetings with parents at school sites. Phone calls or virtual protocols are used for meetings or extended conversation. For Special Services families, if an in-person meeting is needed, we schedule the meeting at the District Office at 294 Green Valley Road. There is a detailed screening procedure when the parent comes to the Special Services front office. We have parents or community members take their own temperature and answer questions regarding symptoms and exposure to COVID. The meetings are held in rooms where we are physically distanced and we disinfect the room before and after the meeting. Masks are required during the meeting. There are a few exemptions to this requirement for students that have developmental disabilities or intellectual delays.

Once we do have meetings at the school sites, we have the following procedure in place for visitors:

1. Each school site will set up a "screening table" to be placed near the front entrance. Employee and visitor must be wearing a mask.

The table will have the following supplies:

- a. Clear directions for the visitor regarding the screening protocol English/Spanish - laminated
- b. No-touch thermometer and directions English/Spanish - laminated
- c. Hand Sanitizer
- d. Cleaner supplied by the custodian
- e. Paper towels supplied by the custodian
- f. List of COVID-19 contact questions English/Spanish - laminated
- g. Signing form English/Spanish - several copies
- h. One container with clean pens, marked clean and one container marked dirty for used pens.

2. The visitor reads the directions, conducts the screening, and signs the form confirming that the screening was done. The visitor shows the form to the school staff, and if the screening is negative, they can go to come into the site. If positive, the visitor must go home.
3. The principal appoints who on the school site will be in charge of the screening table, cleaning the pens, straightening up the forms, checking the thermometer batteries, checking if there is enough hand sanitizer and cleaning the table frequently when in use.

**6. This is a follow-up question re. item #6 (COVID safety precautions for staff). What are staff members that are following COVID precautions do when other staff members are disregarding the district's policy re. social distancing and face masks? The Principal is unable or unwilling to address the issue. I feel that it will only be a matter of time before COVID reaches our campus.**

The health and safety of the PVUSD educational community continues to be our top priority. All staff should be engaging in physical distancing and wearing face masks. If staff is not following the policies, first reengage with your supervisor or site principal. If they do not address your concern, contact the appropriate Assistant Superintendent for your site; Mr. Kasey Klappenback for elementary sites and Ms. Kristin Shouse for secondary sites.

**7. How was the decision made to keep certificated staff home and classified having to work from site? We also have school age children at home with no support through their distance learning.**

Staff work from the location in which they are able to best serve our students, families and community. Not all certificated staff are working from home, just as not all classified staff are working from their site or department. For example, all District and Site Administrators are working from their sites and departments. Classified instructional assistants are working from home as they support distance learning unless the students they serve are receiving small group in-person instruction. Many classified positions can only complete their duties from the sites such as Maintenance and Operations and Food Services.

**8. The district had offered childcare services that never came through. How are you helping the essential classified staff with daycare services?**

PVUSD continues to provide childcare to all staff required to be on site for their elementary age students in recognition of the challenge of having the schools closed. Currently, over 35

students are attending District provided childcare. If you are a Classified employee who is required to work on site and is in need of childcare services, please contact the Extended Learning office at 786-2360 or [extended\\_learning@pvusd.net](mailto:extended_learning@pvusd.net).

- 9. In regards to middle school/jr. high/high school learners, being able to check grades and work in the Synergy portal has been helpful as a parent to gauge where my student needs more help and how they are doing in their classes. What I've noticed is how inconsistent the updating of grades can be. I know our teachers are working hard to do everything, so I'm not expecting everyday. It would be helpful if grades were updated 1x/week. Will there ever be a standard for updating grades in the Synergy portal?**

Thank you for checking your child's grades in Synergy. It will continue to be important that parents are monitoring grades so that we can work together if distance learning is not working for them. Through the planning process with the Reopening Contingency Team, we agreed grading updates would occur at least one time per week for all secondary students. Please reach out to your child's teachers and then the site administrators if grades are not updated in Synergy weekly.

- 10. Can you explain the purpose of the weekly planner please. It is our understanding that this is a communication tool for students and parents and should be written in "student friendly" wording. What should be included in this document? Seems like Principals want a minute by minute break down of every day's lesson which would not be student and parent friendly.**

The purpose of the weekly planner is to provide a daily schedule and structure for students and families. It also serves as a communication tool for parents and students to understand the learning (learning objectives based on standards) that is happening for the week, the expected work that is to be completed for the week, and the schedules of the synchronous sessions students are to attend. The work for the week to be completed should include the due dates, any videos that need to be watched and/or articles/passages that need to be read. The Weekly Planner is expected to be written in grade level appropriate language that is student and parent friendly and placed in a location in the Google Classroom that is easily found.