



Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Edition #28 – Week of October 19, 2020

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

1. What is the process or steps for having students referred to one of the Safe Space locations?

PVUSD Safe Spaces are located at Aptos Junior, Radcliff, Mar Vista, Pajaro Middle and Watsonville High. Safe Spaces exist to provide a supportive and supervised environment for students who need specialized intervention and support. Referrals are made only through the Site Wellness Team. If you feel that your child could benefit from attending a Safe Space, please contact your site administrator. The Site Wellness Team will decide if this is the appropriate action to be taken or if other interventions should be tried prior to attending a Safe Space. If it is determined that this would be the best option for your child, the Site Wellness Team will send the referral to the District Wellness Team. Once the District Wellness Team receives the referral, they will work with the family to place the student in a Safe Space.

2. Santa Cruz City schools have sent out emails with January hybrid in class schedules this week. When will Pajaro be announcing its January schedule?

Santa Cruz City Schools have not finalized their schedules for January at this time. As with all of the other school districts in Santa Cruz County, PVUSD is still in collaboration with staff to determine the class schedules for January. Our schedules will build off of the work embedded in the medium level of the [PVUSD Contingency Plan](#). Our goal is to have the finalized hybrid schedules out to the community by early December.

3. School openings for in-person instruction can only be considered once a county has been in the Red Tier for 14 days. Santa Cruz County has been in the red tier for over 30 days. Why has there been no discussion about starting in person learning earlier than next year?

Since July 2020, we have committed to engaging in distance learning only for the first semester so there was certainty of the instructional model even with the evolving stages of COVID-19. We have opened up five Safe Spaces and three childcare centers throughout the District for students who need specialized intervention and support. In addition, we continue to expand in person, small group instruction for special education students not meeting their IEP goals. From now until the winter break, we will continue to increase in person small group instruction for vulnerable student groups including Foster Youth, Homeless and English Learners not engaging well during distance learning.

4. **Dr. Rodriguez, as a community and educational leader in our community, how do you feel about private and religious school students attending school in person daily, compared to our public school children who are being forced to distance learn? Do you see the disparity for our non-private school children and their families? If not, please understand that public school children are not receiving a quality education, despite how hard PVUSD teachers are working. Working families are forced to have a family member stay home from work in order to teach/monitor our children, causing financial struggle/stress, in addition to erasing decades of progress in the women's right's movement (I can guarantee you that more mothers are home with students than fathers). How is this fair and what are you doing about it?**

Private schools made the decision to move towards opening as quickly as they were allowed. The size of their schools allowed them to implement distancing for all students without needing to implement a hybrid program. They were encouraged to start with small cohorts of students, confirm proper facilities infrastructure and put in place surveillance testing as our guidance requires to ensure the safety of their students and staff. They chose to open and then put those systems in place after the fact. PVUSD will continue to maintain the health and safety of students and staff as a priority. PVUSD system-wide preparations for a hybrid instructional model is underway. We are preparing for surveillance testing, contact tracing and health education. For each school site, we have created a Return to School Readiness Index that includes factors such as HVAC/Air Circulation, Preparation of Classrooms, Signage, Transportation, Nutrition Services, Health and Safety Education, and Communication Systems. The goal of the Return to School Readiness Index is to ensure that our students, staff and schools are ready when the overall County health conditions improve to the point that we can safely return and all other required criteria are met.

5. **When will school facilities such as the pool be open for 3rd party rental use? Santa Cruz City has already opened up facilities for local youth club sports.**

We are providing priority for our PVUSD student athletes and their conditioning cohorts. However, our PVUSD facilities and pools are open to third parties if they are able to follow the State requirements for youth sports. All outside organizations that wish to use our facilities must complete the Facilities Booking online application at https://www.pvUSD.net/pf4/cms2/view_page?d=x&group_id=1516177971836&vdid=9i211ga72610yugt.

6. **Will classified staff also be able to bring their children to work or is it teachers only? Some of us don't have childcare for our children since Covid-19 started and are single parents who can barely afford childcare for our children, especially the non school aged little ones.**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, PVUSD recognizes the challenge of engaging in distance learning and therefore not having childcare for school age children of staff who are required to continue to work both on and off campus. PVUSD created [Standard Operating Procedure #11](#) to support staff, both classified and certificated, to bring school age children (TK-12) of which the employee is the parent or legal guardian to work sites.

There are some work locations are not safe to bring children to work (i.e. Transportation, Food Service, Grounds, Health Offices). Staff must be able to complete assigned duties of responsibilities (i.e. synchronous instruction) with child(ren) present. If the location is deemed not to be safe for children or duties cannot be completed as assigned with children present, and the employee is required to physically be at work, PVUSD has and will continue to provide childcare options through community partners. If the employee works

in a location deemed safe, the employee's specific work environment and space allow for the presence of children, and where their school age child(ren) can be consistently supervised and maintained within eyesight of the employee. Contact Extended Learning at 786-2360 to learn about available childcare options for our employees.

- 7. In my case I took a family leave with a pay cut, to be able to help my elementary and middle schooler students, to realize that some classified positions such as bus drivers, IA, Yard duties are getting paid 100% without having to do any task or much. How is this fair for essential office staff?**

All classified positions throughout the District continue to be valued and important. All classified staff are working their full assigned work hours daily to do their part to support effective district operations. While some of the job classifications, such as bus drivers, are not currently working with transporting students or working at the bus yard, they are working their full assigned work hours in another department including Maintenance and Operations, Food Services and within school sites.

- 8. Will the health offices at the school sites also get new thermometers that we can keep in the health office? It would be nice to be able to keep are distance when checking temperatures in the health office and faster if we have more than one student at a time. Thank you**

Each school site was given two no-touch thermometers in August 2020, one for the health office and one for any screening done in the front of the school. If the Health Care Assistant needs a thermometer, the first step would be to check in with the Office Manager and see if two were delivered and where they are being kept. If another thermometer is needed, the Office Manager can order one from the warehouse via purchasing.

- 9. Why are teachers doing individual assessments with students in a group setting. I don't think it's appropriate for other students and parents to know how my child is doing.**

Teachers may administer assessments in a small group to be able to deliver instructions and facilitate the process but students should be working individually on their own. With our elementary math curriculum, Bridges, teachers may give an assessment to our early learners by watching two students interact with the math manipulatives and games to determine individual growth. There are some assessments, for example early literacy, where teachers may test students in a 1:1 setting. If you have questions about the assessment environment, I encourage you to contact the school administration.

- 10. Given that Coronavirus-related deaths among Latino and Black Americans are still disproportionately high, according to a new CDC report, how can PVUSD reopen this school year? Our Latino staff/families are at increased risk.**

You are accurate that we do have a higher percentage of COVID-19 cases in Watsonville than in the rest of the County. Public health models maintain that a person's susceptibility to COVID can be attributed to socioeconomic status, educational level, housing quality and density, access to health care services, environmental pollution, and increased exposure to the virus due to occupation and returning to work (e.g., frontline, essential, and critical infrastructure workers). Many communities including ours have seen a disproportionate number of cases among Latinos. PVUSD takes very seriously the commitment to the health and safety of students and staff throughout the PVUSD Reopening Contingency Plan.