



Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Edition #5 – Week of May 4, 2020

Questions are quoted as I received them directly from our community

1. When will the 2020-2021 school year begin?

The expectation is that we will see a shift of the COVID-19 pandemic within the next several months and therefore we will be able to return to our schools for the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year with some restrictions. Next school year is scheduled to start on Monday, August 17, 2020, and we hope to have students in our classrooms and schools, although we are planning for other scenarios.

2. How would the class of 2020 graduate? Will there be a ceremony?

Over 800 responded to our Senior Class of 2020 Graduation Survey with the majority of the votes for celebrating the entire PVUSD Senior Class of 2020 with: a Virtual Graduation, a Drive Thru Distribution Event, and a Physical Graduation Reunion in winter or Spring of 2021. These activities will take place at school sites and throughout our community. All graduation plans were approved by the County Health Department to ensure compliance with Local Shelter in Place and State Stay at Home orders to safeguard our collective health and safety.

Between May 13-15, graduates will receive their caps, gowns and family yard decoration signs during our Ready, Set, Gown Event. The pick-up will occur at Watsonville High School and Diamond Technology Institute on May 13th, Aptos High School and Renaissance on May 14th and PVHS, New School and PCCS on May 15th. As a result, students will be able to wear their caps and gowns to take their virtual graduation photos at home. On June 1-4, graduates and families will participate in a 2020 Vision for Our Future: Honoring Our Graduates festive drive thru event at school sites in which members of the Senior Class of 2020 will be celebrated and receive a “Graduation Swag Bag” that contains their diploma cover, accomplishment medals/stoles, sashes and program. The week of June 8th is Senior Check Out and official diplomas will be given out upon return of textbooks, athletic gear, library books, and Chromebooks.

From May 25-29, we will also be cheering on our 1,179 graduates through the launch of an official “Lights on Grads” and Yard/Door Decoration Event in which families and community members will be encouraged to decorate their yards, front doors, and use outdoor lights or hanging lights to symbolize their support for the Senior Class of 2020.

Be watching the virtual ceremony countdown clock on the school websites over the next several weeks. On June 5, 2020, we will hold the virtual graduation ceremonies where each graduate will be recognized.

3. How are 8th graders able to get their belongings and Diploma from school?

All middle and intermediate schools will communicate individually with their students on the date within the window of May 26-28 to pick up their belongings from school and return District materials including textbooks, library books and instruments. We will ensure that the interactions and site

visits adhere to all physical distancing and County Health Department protocols. Their diploma will be mailed home after their virtual celebration.

4. Will there be a virtual Senior Award Ceremony to replace the physical one?

There will be community recognition and celebration for scholarships through a slideshow that will appear on each of AHS, PVHS, WHS school website. Each student awardee will be represented by a personalized slide. Certificates and scholarship award letters will be distributed at the 2020 Vision for Our Future: Honoring Our Graduates festive drive thru event. Individual senior award information will appear on the personalized slide of each senior during the virtual graduation.

5. I want my daughter to go to summer school are you still doing the home packets for summer school?

PVUSD summer learning materials will be different than the home packets currently being provided to elementary students. These pre-assembled summer learning packets will include reading material, reading log, and activity book that focuses on writing, science, reading and math. The district will also provide a suggested home learning schedule with bilingual videos to support parents in accessing the learning packets. Lastly, a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) website will be available for students to access online lessons developed by some of our community partner organizations such as City of Watsonville, Arts Council of Santa Cruz, and Code Naturally. Summer learning packets, sample schedule, and STEAM website will be available to all K-8 students. For more information about summer school, please call the PVUSD Extended Learning Department at 831-786-2360.

6. Are there any more hot spots available?

PVUSD is committed to closing the digital divide to enable equity in distance learning. To date we have distributed 1,000 hotspots to our families. If a student has no access to internet, they should call the Technology Community Hotline at 831-786-2493 to be placed on the request list for a hotspot. We are anticipating the arrival of requested hotspots from the California Department of Education, Google and Digital Promise. As a long-term solution, we are working with multiple local internet providers, including Cruzio and Charter Spectrum to provide internet to households. They continue to install free Internet in students' homes that live throughout Watsonville. More information about these internet services is available on the PVUSD website COVOD-19 Tab.

7. Why is P.V. High School, and Cesar Chavez sending out homework for every period? When they were attending school, they only had 3 periods for 1 whole day, for about 2 days straight. Now it is homework for every period, every day. This is getting my child overwhelmed, giving them anxiety and sleepless nights.

After the first week of distance learning, we decreased the base instructional program to four hours a day including time spent on either Zoom or Google Hangout, physical education, independent work etc. which should equate to about 40 minutes per period. The instructional hours are differentiated (either increased or decreased) based on student needs including students with special needs, ELD support, intervention or Advanced Placement. We have clarified that there should be no additional homework assigned over and above the regular classroom work noted above. We will be providing tips for teachers on how to make the instruction more independent on the student level as we recognize this is not home schooling. If your children continue to experience too much work, please contact the site principals to discuss needed modifications to the workload.

8. My child is in 8th grade and was in the process of being assessed by the school district for a 504 plan or IEP for high school. That process has now stopped, and I have been told it won't continue until students are able to meet in person with the resource specialist & psychologist. That means not until next school year at the earliest. I want to be sure my child is set up for

success going into high school next year and she won't be successful without accommodations. Any chance staff will reconsider assessing and testing students for services through a platform like Zoom? When do you see educational testing continuing so that the needs of all students are met?

This is an unprecedented time when involving assessments and completing the initial IEP process. The Special Education Department is working individually with parents and students to complete as much of each assessment as possible during this time. Initial eligibility cannot be determined without the complete assessment, including appropriate observations. While the Special Education Department assessment process is pending for your child, please contact the principal of your child's high school and they will be able assist you with acquiring the appropriate general accommodations to ensure that your child is successful.

The Pajaro Valley Unified School District is following guidance from the California Department of Education (CDE), federal law provides timelines that are in effect, except for days between regular sessions. The CA Legislature defined school closure days as days between regular sessions. Therefore, the timeline for the assessment is not running, but instead is on pause until we come back to school. As soon as we return the assessment timeline will begin again. If you have further questions regarding assessment, please do not hesitate to contact the Special Education Department at 786-2130.

9. How are staff including special education receiving training so that they can provide the necessary services to meet students' needs through ZOOM or Google classroom?

Special Education staff have worked directly with program directors, program specialists and TOSAs for professional development in areas of need and support in regard to ZOOM and Google classroom. In addition, we have provided several online learning sessions for both teachers and instructional assistants. The department developed a Google Classroom for staff with a variety of different trainings that include for example a focus on behavior management, supporting students with autism, along with how to promote self-care. This Google Classroom also includes a series that focuses solely on Google and Zoom platforms. These training sessions are available to be viewed by staff and include topics such as Welcome to Google Classroom, How to use Google Classroom, Online Etiquette, How to Start and Use Google Voice, and How to Use Zoom.

10. I have an autistic child that has an IEP and she is missing out on her weekly speech services that she would usually get at school. Is there any way that these can continue through zoom or another virtual method?

We are encouraging the Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP) to conduct tele-therapy when it is a good fit for the student and the pathologist. Each family is being considered individually and many of the SLPs are utilizing some form of tele-therapy. The best plan is made collaboratively to meet the student's needs which vary in accordance to student goals. Your speech pathologist can send ideas for activities to do at home, printables that are picked up at the school, and links for online activities. The best thing to do is reach out to the speech pathologist directly and talk to them about your concerns.