



# Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)  
Edition #9 – Week of June 1, 2020

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

**1. Under these unprecedented times that the Seniors class of 2020 had to face. You have said that they will have a physical graduation in 2021. Is this a promise from you as Superintendent of PVUSD, or is it up to each administrator from each High school in our district? I so hope that you answer my concern for these vibrant youth in our community, they are sure deserving of this promise.**

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. All high schools celebrated their virtual graduation and drive thru distribution (New School to occur on Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup>) in an equitable manner. All high school sites will also have their physical graduation reunion, similar for all high school sites, when health requirements allow gatherings in the Winter or Spring of 2021.

**2. Mrs. Rodriguez, We all worked so hard through our High school years to look to the day, when our family members would all be smiling, and feel that joy in their hearts for us to celebrate our physical graduation. Will you be the one to make the final promise, for us to have a physical graduation in 2021?**

Once the County of Santa Cruz Health Department allows for large gatherings, we will fulfill our final promise for the physical graduation reunion for our graduating seniors of 2020. Our current plan is to hold the event in the Winter or Spring of 2021.

**3. Europe has been far ahead of us in regard to the pandemic including distance learning and returning to school. The kids have returned to school because researchers have found that kids are not spreading disease but rather the adults. Since returning to school there have been no major problems. Is this research and experience in Europe being considered as we look at going back to school?**

We are following the guidelines from health experts from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the County of Santa Cruz Health Department. These experts are consulting with experts throughout the world. It is also important to note that many countries that have resumed schools have closed down schools shortly after reopening them such as in [Israel](#), [France](#), and [South Korea](#).

**4. Are students going to be able to go back to school?**

We miss our students and would love to have our students physically back in the schools. We are currently working with all stakeholders to identify ways to reopen our schools while keeping our students, staff and families healthy as well as ensuring we follow our County Health requirements. Please fill out the student, parent or staff survey release this week by text and email to voice your opinion on what is important to you before Monday, June 8, 2020.

**5. Have you guys updated if the middle schoolers and high schoolers are going to have sorts for after school?**

We understand the importance of athletics for our athlete scholars. Our contingency planning includes plans for athletics. I am working with the Superintendents from Santa Cruz City Schools, Scotts Valley and San Lorenzo Valley and the CCS Commissioner to determine next steps that are in the best interest of students.

**6. Will a student who failed a class be able to participate in the virtual graduation?**

Any senior who did not graduate due to a failed class should have already received notice from either their site administrator or their academic counselor on next steps. We do have some cases of students in concurrent credit recovery who are within five credits of required credits for graduation and appear to be on track with the course. Therefore, those seniors were included in the Presentation of Graduates. These families are aware that no official diploma will be issued once the course has been completed with a passing grade.

**7. Why are the 7 & 8th grade students given a maximum of 4 hours of "class" per day when the school day is longer? My child has actually less than 2 hours of work/school day. Kids need to be given the opportunity to learn for more than 4 hours/school day.**

PVUSD began distance learning with an expectation of a five-hour instructional day for students. After the first week of distance learning, we heard significant feedback from students, staff and parents that it was too much for the students. Therefore, we reduced the base instructional day to four hours. With this shift, the May 2020 Distance Learning Survey shows that 91% of students now feel they are receiving just the right amount of work or too much work. For the 2020-2021 school year, the amount of instructional minutes is still be determined to support all students of varying achievement levels.

**8. I'm concerned that students have very little face-time communication with teachers. Why are teachers not hosting daily Zoom meetings to provide instruction? Private schools and local charter school PCS are providing daily classes via video instruction. We are robbing our students of an education.**

The grand majority of our teachers are holding Google Hangout Meetings and using other ways of connecting with students multiple times during the week. Our student data from the distance learning survey administered in May 2020 identified that 59% of our students connect with their teacher(s) between a few times a day to several times a week. In addition, 35% of students found participation in classroom meetings the most engaging part of their learning. Therefore, we are working on sustaining that contact and even identifying additional means for students to connect with educators should distance learning continue when schools reopen.

**9. My questions are, I am a parent who has been working nonstop through this pandemic and have three children one in high school and two in elementary school. I would like for my children to have the same opportunity to be part of summer distance learning even though our children are not behind and did fine with distance learning. My husband and I have working nonstop through this pandemic and care for our children's education. I just think is only fair for our children to have same opportunity to participate in summer distance learning in order for our children to have guidance from a teacher and not to fall behind**

During summer break, all elementary and middle school students will continue to have access to English Language Arts and Math software in order for them to continue working on academic content. In addition, a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) website will be available for students to access a variety of enrichment activities. To request a kit, families can call the Extended Learning office at 786-2360 or email [extended\\_learning@pvusd.net](mailto:extended_learning@pvusd.net).

**10. Will the school offices be getting plastic partitions installed to protect staff while they continue to provide service to the community?**

We have been using different models throughout the District in an effort to find the plexiglass partition that will work best. We have ordered 100 partitions which should arrive around July 10, 2020. They will be provided to each site and department.