



Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Edition #34 – Week of December 7, 2020

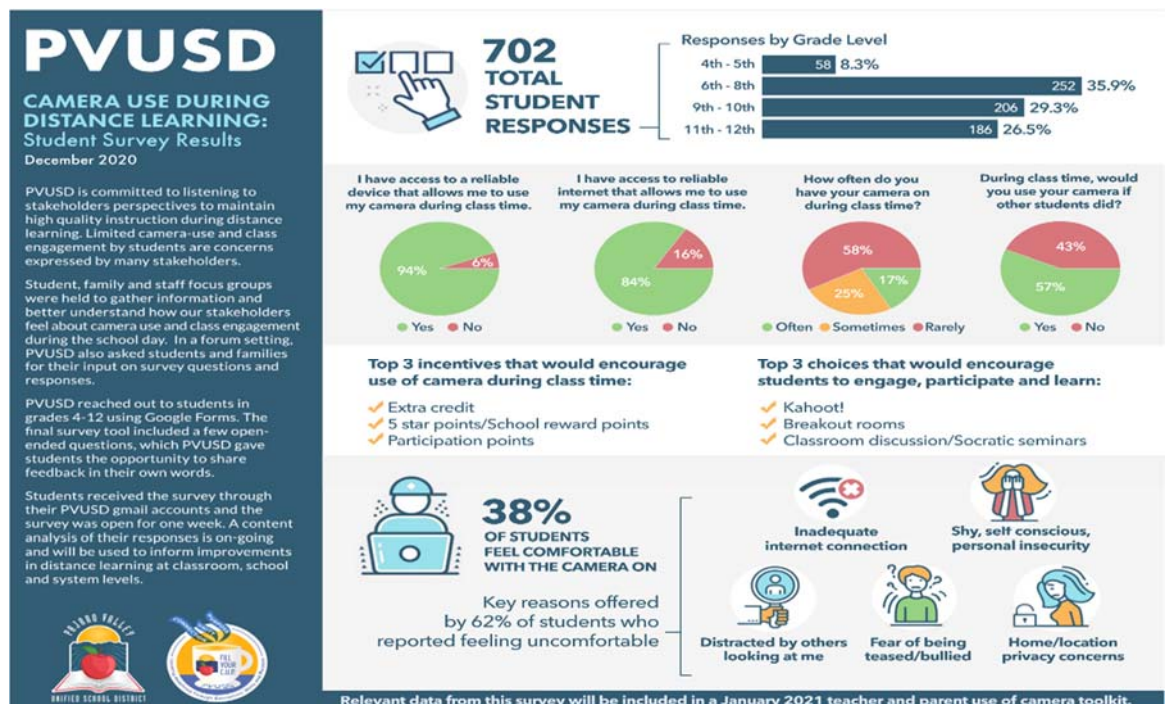
Questions are quoted as I received them directly from our community.

1. My family picks up meals for our 4 children every day. I am worried about the upcoming school break and having access to food. My question is if you know where we can get food if we need it because the break is long.

We are very fortunate to live in a caring community. During the break, families can access food at a variety of pantries in our community. Our partner, Second Harvest Food Bank, offers weekly drive-through distribution sites which can be found by visiting their website, www.thefoodbank.org, under the tab Find Food or by calling 831 662-0991 in Santa Cruz County, 831 758-1523 in Monterey County, or 831 637-0340 in San Benito County. DoorDash, United Way, Second Harvest and 211 are partnering to support food delivery. To access a new service, you may also Dial 211. A specialist will be ready to take the order. Please give 48 hours from the time your order is placed with DoorDash to time of delivery Some requirements: You must live within 10 miles of a participating food pantry and have an address with a porch, front door, or other appropriate area for contactless delivery. Additionally, Pajaro Valley Loaves and Fishes has a pantry program that provides emergency and supplemental groceries every weekday morning, Monday to Friday, from 9 am to 11:30 AM and from 1 to 3 PM. Loaves and Fishes also has a mid-day meal program every day from 12 - 1 PM that supports farmworkers, homeless, elderly and disabled individuals. Their website is www.pvloavesandfishes.org and their phone number is 831 722-4144. In Monterey County, the Food Bank for Monterey County has programs that support kids and also emergency food assistance. Their website is www.foodbankformontereycounty.org and their number is 831 758-1523.

2. What were the results of the student survey on camera usage?

There were 702 responses from students in grades 4-12. The results of the survey are being shared with the community on Friday, December 11, 2020 and can be seen in the graphic below. We will use these results to finalize our January 2021 Teacher and Parent Toolkits:



3. **"Santa Cruz County public school Superintendents and Charter Leaders are working together to advocate that California's pandemic response prioritize COVID-19 vaccinations for school personnel after frontline medical workers and residential care patients receive the first available doses." This is great news! Many parents fully support school personnel getting vaccine priority. What can we, as the parent community, do to support PVUSD and help you advocate for this? We are ready and willing to help, and collectively want to have our voices heard to support these efforts.**

Thank you for your willingness to support. You have the opportunity to provide a public comment to the Department of Public Health Vaccine Task Force on the COVID vaccine distribution in California. Please send comments advocating for school workers to be prioritized for the vaccine as soon as possible and before students are back in school. Please send comments prior to the next meeting on December 16th. COVID19VaccineOutreach@cdph.ca.gov

4. **What are the reasons Classified and Management employees are required to work from their office? With the new Stay at Home Order in place in CA and COVID cases increasing, will there be considerations to allow Classified and Management, or certain positions within those groups, to work from home?**

On December 3, 2020, Governor Newsom added a Regional Stay at Home Order for the State. The Order does not modify [existing state guidance regarding K-12 school](#)

Schools that are currently open are able to continue to provide in-person instruction on school sites.

- Schools that are currently operating under an elementary school waiver are able to continue to provide instruction to students on school sites.
- Schools that reopened while their county was in a less restrictive tier are able to continue to provide instruction to students on school sites.
- All schools that have not yet reopened for in-person instruction are able to continue to serve small cohorts of students (e.g., students with disabilities) following [CDPH Guidance](#).

Schools are still required to follow the Schools Guidance issued by CDPH which outlines requirements for safe conditions, testing and tracing. Schools may be required to close if certain percentages of staff and students are diagnosed with COVID-19. All [existing guidance applicable to schools](#) can be found on the CDPH website. Santa Cruz County is currently not under this order. As PVUSD is committed to providing Safe Spaces for non-participating students, small group instruction for qualifying special education students as well as serving the students, families and community through distance learning, both management and most classified staff responsibilities must be performed at a school site or department.

5. **Why aren't teachers teaching online like they would in a classroom? So many teachers started that way and now they only play videos or give us reading to teach ourselves. We are not passing tests as we haven't learnt the information in the test. What are you going to change for next semester so teachers can actually teach us, this isn't working and we have anxiety every time we take a test as we have no clue what it is about?**

Teachers and staff are trying to find the balance between work assigned during synchronous time, independent work, and group work to ensure that students are successful both in class and on assessments. For the second semester, we are looking at the Distance Learning Schedule to add more synchronous time for students who may need additional supports or small group instruction. We are also discussing how we can link the independent work assignments and assessments to the teaching that is occurring during synchronous class time. Professional development for teachers is planned in the areas of maximizing "Independent time," best practices for breakout rooms on Google Meet and technology tools. Instructional coaches will continue to offer drop-in office hours for teachers to utilize if they would like collaboration around their lesson planning. We will continue to have focused professional development for all teachers around instructional design and student engagement. If teachers continue to use the

resources in the Google Classrooms and the Professional Developments, along with the collaborative help, students will receive the most comparable instruction possible to in-person learning.

6. I am a sophomore and wanted to get into the winter credit recovery program but I didn't get in and was placed in the waitlist. I will be home and want to take advantage of the time to make up credits. Are there options for me?

Due to limited availability, PVUSD's Winter Session Credit Recovery program prioritizes giving seniors the opportunity to recover the credits they need in order to graduate in May. We currently have offered this program to seniors to participate from all high schools. If not all seniors confirm their participation, we will open enrollment to Juniors that have 15 or more credits to recover. Other opportunities for Credit Recovery will be offered during this next Spring Semester as well as Summer School. You can find more information on our [Credit Recovery webpage](#). Look for a drop down menu on the Credit Recovery menu and select Spring 2021 to see the registration timeline for next semester.

7. Can you address the readiness, or state thereof, of each of our schools within PVUSD. I have heard you say in previous newsletters that you are working hard with your staff to prepare our students to return to their classrooms. You mentioned in previous newsletters that each school had a benchmark for readiness. Can you address this specifically, and why: Yourself, Administrators, and Unions are bowing to the pressures of politics and ignoring science. I can attest to many students being left behind.

Both District and Site staff are tracking the readiness of each site through a comprehensive School Readiness Index. Some examples of items on the Index include HVAC and window repairs, signage and painting, Food Services staffing, supplies and logistics, Transportation, purchase and delivery of personal protective equipment, and installation of disinfecting stations, thermal screening stations, and new PA systems. The School Readiness Index is updated by staff for each site as projects are complete.

8. What are you doing to get more Safe Spaces open for students?

We originally opened five Safe Spaces with two cohorts at each location. We now have seven Safe Spaces locations which are growing to three cohorts at each location. That will allow us to serve approximately 300 students within the seven Safe Spaces. We are prioritizing students with limited to no internet access to attend the Safe Spaces.

9. Many teachers feel extremely disheartened at the requirement of having to mark students "present" when they only attend 10 minutes out of a 3-hour school day. Alternatively, I still have a handful of students in my class that show up every day, but have their cameras off and are non-responsive when spoken to... should I be marking these children absent? Even the new "Participation Requirement" scoring system for CDE is largely based on attendance and whether they were in class at all that day or not. Teachers are working very hard to contact families, reach out to students, refer to Site and District Wellness Teams, refer students to "Safe Spaces," yet it seems many families are still not receiving any direct supports from the district (other than hotspots and Chromebooks). There is only so much teachers can do from a distance. I am very concerned about the large number of students, in my class and many others, that are failing their grade level, and missing out on their education by not TRULY attending and participating in class. What does the district plan to do to rectify this?

Please keep attendance and participation as two separate actions. If a student leaves class after a short amount of time you should inform the parent. If it happens again then you should let the parent know that if their child continues to leave class early then they will be marked absent. This would be the equivalent of a student coming in person and then leaving your classroom which is why it results in an absence. Please keep in mind there are students with connection issues so you should consider the pattern of student behavior when deciding to mark absent. The same actions would pertain to participation. You need to notify the parents and let them know that the lack of participation will likely impact their child's grades. Being logged in and not responding should be reflected in the participation mark not the absence area.

In regards to direct support from the district, every student that is referred to the District Wellness Team is contacted and offered support or additional services. By department, direct support offered are: **Extended Learning:** Safe Spaces, transportation, **Parent Outreach:** parent support and tutoring, **Migrant:** tutoring and supplies, **Attendance:** support getting children to attend class, supplies, home visits, referrals to outside agencies, **SEC:** district counseling, referrals to PVPSA and Healthy Start referrals. Additionally, small groups will begin in the second semester to provide increased in person instruction in some cases.

10. I heard that PVUSD offers free internet services. Is that true? I am not sure I can continue to pay the high cost of the internet and I am concerned about my son's education.

No, this is not true. We seek to ensure that all of our students have access to wi-fi through hotspots when internet services are not available at their home. Cruzio Internet, a local company, is committed to closing the digital divide and to bringing reliable, high-speed and affordable internet services to our community. Since the start of Distance Learning, Cruzio has collaborated with PVUSD to ensure that qualifying families have access to affordable monthly plans. Families who are interested in applying for affordable internet can do so by visiting <https://cruzio.com/services/broadband/easc-suf/>. The form's signup code is EASC2020SCHOOLS. We currently have families using this program who have reliable internet access for under \$20 per month.