



Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Edition #41 – Week of February 22, 2021

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

1. When will our children go back to school? Is it true that we are going back to school on March 22nd?

We look forward to seeing our students again in our classrooms. Implementation of our updated hybrid mode will have a staggered start by grade level. We are ready to welcome back all preschool, TK through first grade students for in person afternoon instruction on Monday, April 5, 2021. All students in second and third grade and students receiving special education services will return for afternoon in person on Monday, April 19, 2021 and students in grades 4th-12th grade will be returning back in small cohorts on Monday, May 1, 2021.

2. Why are students still going to be in distance learning in the morning and going back to school only in the afternoons?

Due to physical distancing requirements, we cannot have all students on site at the same time, therefore, when they come back, they will be placed in stable cohorts. We developed the hybrid mode with afternoon in person schedule to align with key feedback that we received from students, parents and staff in multiple surveys regarding returning back to in person instruction:

- In all three parent and student surveys, prioritization of the health and safety of students, staff and families was the number one priority. The afternoon schedule will ensure we implement all ten mitigations strategies including stable groupings, physical distancing and limited on site eating.
- We established a schedule which would allow for continuity of instruction with all students maintaining their current schedule and current teacher for the entire school year. Feedback from parents spoke significantly to the negative impact of students having to change teachers during the school year.
- To support student academic growth, we needed to increase instructional access for students while maintaining current schedules, routines, and small group times coupled with additional in person instruction.
- With approximately 40% of parents wishing to engage in distance learning for the remainder of the school year, we needed to support staff and students with medical accommodations or with the strong desire to remain in distance learning for the entire year.
- During distance learning, our students have continued to have the most benefit from daily synchronous instruction with their teacher. A longer day hybrid schedule would have resulted in entire days of asynchronous instruction for students without access to their teacher or support. With our hybrid mode plan, they will receive live distance instruction daily for several hours and then attend in person several days a week.

We have piloted this hybrid mode plan afternoon in person schedule with six schools over the last month. We had positive feedback from both parents and students on their experience. Here are a few comments from our students:

Blanca O., Senior--"Being back on campus is helping me stay on track and the staff here are helping us with our attendance. My attendance has gotten better and I have been doing all my work now that I'm physically here at school."

Sincere, 5th Grade: "I get help with my work, I practice and then I get better. I reach my goals. Ms. Teigen helps us with YCP (Youth Cinema Project). It is nice being around my friends."

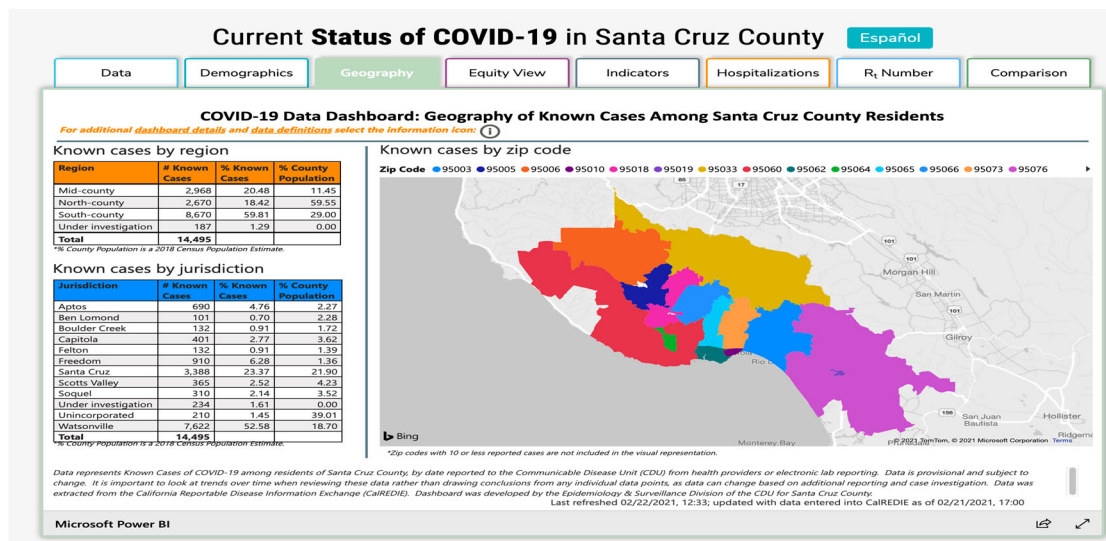
Kayla, 1st Grade – "I love learning from my teacher, getting to do art projects, and being able to see my friends in person".

3. Why is it that PVUSD is and teachers are getting priority for vaccines when the current plan is only to maybe phased opening for Tk-1 after April 5. What are the rest of teachers doing?

We will be phasing in the rest of the grade levels over the month of April as noted above. All PVUSD teachers and instructional staff will continue to provide distance learning and office hours and afternoon support to students as they currently do. As grades are phased in, teachers and instructional staff will also provide in person instruction to students in cohorts.

4. The timeline for return to in-person instruction for PVUSD is much later than the other districts in the county. Why is PVUSD so behind the other districts? Can it be moved sooner if the Covid case rates improve and more instructors get vaccinated?

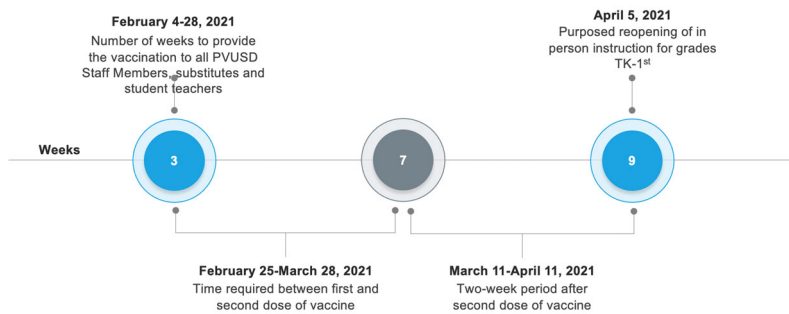
The case rate within PVUSD is significantly higher than throughout the rest of the County. As noted in the graphic below, 52% of all cases in Santa Cruz County are within our District boundaries while counting for only 18% of the county population. Due to the much higher case count in our district, we elected to wait the entire two weeks after the second dose to continue prioritizing health and safety and to ensure that we are protecting both students and staff.



Below you will find the timeline that shows when our employees received their first dose, second dose and when the two-week period ends. This timeline allowed us to open Preschool, TK-1st grade on April 5, 2021 with a phased in approach for the other grades.



PVUSD Vaccination Timeline



5. I understand staff needs to quarantine if they travel outside of the country, but what about students and their families? Many state they just arrived from out of the country and continue to show up on campus potentially exposing staff.

There was a travel advisory for Thanksgiving and winter break. As of this week, the quarantine mandate affiliated with ABAHO “[Gatherings: Recommendations on Staying Safe from COVID-19 During the Holidays](#)” no longer applies. The most current CDPH guidance for Californians/residents of CA to follow when traveling, is the 1/6/21 [Travel Advisory](#), which states Californians should avoid non-essential travel to any part of California more than 120 miles from one's place of residence, or to other states or countries. "Non-essential travel" includes travel that is considered tourism or recreational in nature. A required quarantine period is not required by either CDPH or the County of Santa Cruz. As to when to self-quarantine post-travel, this applies only to out-of-state or out-of-country travel. Those traveling within California, even if they are traveling more than 120 miles from their residence, do not need to self-quarantine at this time.

6. Google platforms are everywhere in our schools. Recently Google was exposed in a New Mexico lawsuit against Google Corp. that they were tracking student information outside of the classroom. Can you confirm for me as a parent that this is not happening, and if it is, what will be done to stop it?

Recently the state of New Mexico Attorney General filed a lawsuit alleging that Google has violated student privacy in their G Suite for Education platform. Google has responded saying, "These claims are factually wrong. G Suite for Education allows schools to control account access and requires that schools obtain parental consent when necessary. We do not use personal information from users in primary and secondary schools to target ads. School districts can decide how best to use Google for Education in their classrooms and we are committed to partnering with them."

Although we cannot predict the outcome of this litigation, PVUSD takes student data privacy very seriously, and is extremely careful when implementing new systems to make sure that they incorporate secure systems that adhere to legal requirements designed to keep students safe online and to protect student data privacy.

7. Will all teachers be required to be vaccinated before being allowed back in the classroom with students? Please tell me YES.

No, although we are encouraging all employees to take advantage of the opportunity, we cannot require a staff member to receive the vaccine.

8. Will employment be affected if staff refuses to get vaccinated?

No, employment rights will not be affected.

9. I was supposed to get my vaccine this week according to your timeline. I preregistered but have had no follow up. When will I be scheduled?

All PVUSD preregistered employees should have received their vaccine appointment by now. Our final group of employees have the opportunity to receive their vaccine this weekend. If you still have not received your appointment, please email our Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Alison Niizawa, and she will assist you.

10. Is there any plan for vaccinating parents before returning to on site learning? What about the families of teachers going back to work?

We are working with our local partners including Salud Para La Gente to ensure that our families have information about vaccine availability according to the current tier outlined by California Department of Public Health and Santa Cruz County Public Health. We are providing information to our families about the vaccine to help them make an informed decision about receiving the vaccine. Employee's families and spouses will have to acquire the vaccine through their medical provider or place of employment.