



Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Edition #42 – Week of March 1, 2021

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

- 1. Dear Dr. Rodriguez, I am a student from Aptos Jr. High School and I have a petition to make. I would like for you to give 7th grade students and older permission to change our names and profile pictures in our YouTube accounts. Some of us students need a hobby during these difficult times and most sports and other extracurricular activities are shut down during the Covid-19 pandemic. Students like myself would like to start YouTube channels in order to have something to do each day besides school. If you let us change our YouTube channel names and Profile Pictures that could actually help a number of students.**

I appreciate receiving questions from our students and thank you for sending it to me so you may have the information. School Google accounts are automatically created from our Student Information System with information provided during enrollment. All accounts are synced 6 times a day to ensure new accounts are created as soon as possible for new students, and existing accounts have the correct information to allow for teachers to accurately email, share and assign classwork. The PVUSD Google account should be used only for school related endeavors since it is a district provided account that is tied into dozens of instructional applications. If a student wants to use YouTube to post personal content unrelated to school activities, with a personalized profile picture and name, then they should [create a personal Google/Youtube account](#) with parent permission of course. Students must be 13 years or older to create a YouTube account on their own ([Youtube Terms of Service](#)). If you are not at least 13 years old, your parents can help create and manage an account ([How to Create and Manage Google Account](#)). As you move forward in life, it is always best practice to have two accounts; one for your professional work or school content, and one for your personal online presence that can be associated with your personal social media accounts. For more information, Common Sense Media has some great supporting content for parents in [Spanish](#) and [English](#) to help parents guide their children to safely access YouTube.

- 2. Dr. Rodriguez, I received yesterday a survey regarding the return of school for elementary aged students. What surprised me the most was that the students would only be in the classroom for a total of one and half hours per day. Why is the district not allowing students to be in the classroom full days in a hybrid setting? I fully support our kids returning to the classroom but this makes it difficult for parents who still have to work. Thank you**

One of the key comments we received from parents in a recent parent survey was the desire to maintain their current teacher. Additionally, according to our February 2021 Elementary Parent Survey, 40% of parents wished to remain in distance learning. If we implemented a traditional hybrid model, it would have resulted in at least 25% of all students changing their teachers with only 9 weeks left of school. Another concern shared by parents was that the students had a significantly shorter instructional day than in a regular school year and therefore were learning much less. Therefore, we decided that any schedule we developed should ensure that students kept their current teacher and had more instructional time mirroring and more closely aligned to what they would have received in a regular school year.

We have learned from schools across the nation that the traditional hybrid AB schedule is very challenging for students as they have entire days where they did not have access to their teachers for support and instruction. While some students can work independently for several days a week at a time, many experience difficulties.

Therefore, when the students do see their teacher the following day in person, the teacher has to spend substantial time addressing concerns, questions or lack of engagement related to students' asynchronous days which reduces overall instructional time. With our schedule, all students will continue to have daily access to their current teacher for questions, guidance and instruction in distance learning.

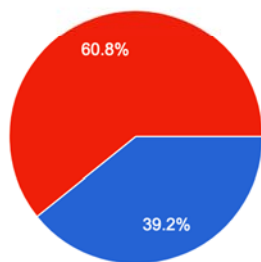
3. You say that 40% of parents don't want to take their kids back to in-person learning? Where was this "voting" station at? Because I didn't vote. The majority of the parents I have spoken to want to take their kids back and didn't vote either? Are these 40% parents/teachers? If students stay home because of medical and/or preferences. Why can't they just continue to do virtual learning, and the other students come back to school? That is being done at so many schools now. Why is that not an option for us? Do parents who do not have the option of staying home even have a say?

On February 21, 2021, we sent a survey to all elementary parents (TK-5/6 grade) for their feedback on return to in-person instruction. An email and text were sent to all emails and phone numbers on file in our Student Management System, Synergy. If you did not receive the survey and you are an elementary parent, please check with your school's office or check online to update your information. We will be sending out a secondary parent survey within the next week or so.

We received 2,917 responses from elementary parents. We did a separate survey for our teachers, therefore, they are not included in the 40%. Below you will find the response to the question about coming back to in person learning with 39.2% stating that they wanted to remain in full time distance learning for the rest of the school year. PVUSD has consistently committed to ensuring that all families have the option to remain in distance learning throughout the 2020-2021 school year with a teacher who provides daily synchronous instruction. Implementing an AB hybrid schedule would have required about 25% of all students to change their teacher with only 9 weeks left of school. As noted in the response above, this was a concern to the majority of the parents.

Assuming health and safety criteria for increasing in-person instruction are met, how would you prefer your student attends school after Spring Break? / Suponiendo que se cumplan todas los criterios de salud y seguridad para aumentar la instrucción en persona, ¿cómo preferirían que su estudiante asistiera a la escuela después del descanso de primavera?

2,917 responses



- Distance learning with teachers delivering standardized course content online only. / Aprendizaje a distancia con maestros que imparten contenido de cursos estandarizados en línea solamente.
- Hybrid mode (combination of at school and distance learning) at school adhering to the criteria set forth by the California Dept. of Public Health (including physical distancing, disinfect...)

4. Please specify what are the “significant changes” needed in order to reopen in person schooling for a full 5 days a week for all grades and why has a solution not been developed in the one year since closure?

The solutions and plans developed by PVUSD are all based upon local public health conditions related to COVID-19. Currently, Santa Cruz County is still in the purple tier. As noted in the chart below, this precludes school districts from opening up secondary schools. For that reason, there are no public school districts in Santa Cruz County that are currently providing in person instruction for middle and high schools as we are not allowed to provide in person instruction at the secondary level while we are still in the purple tier. We do anticipate Santa Cruz County will move into the red tier in the near future which will then allow school districts to provide in person instruction at the secondary level. Regardless of whether or not we are in the purple or red tier, we still need to maintain the six feet of physical distancing guidance provided by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Their guidance states to “maximize space between seating

and desks. Distance teacher and other staff desks at least 6 feet away from student and other staff desks. Distance student chairs at least 6 feet away from one another, except where 6 feet of distance is not possible after a good-faith effort has been made.” We measured the square footage of all of our rooms and found that all primary classrooms (as they are varying sizes) can accommodate at least 12 K-2 students with the 6 feet of physical distance and 15 students within the other classrooms grades 3-12. For that reason, we are implementing a hybrid model with two cohorts as we are not able to have all students returning at the same time.

One significant change to return to in person instruction for a full five-day week for all grades would require CDPH to remove the physical distancing requirements so that all students could once again be present in their classrooms, common areas and buses at the same time.

Table 1. School reopening actions for in-person instruction, by Blueprint Tier

Yellow	Orange	Red	Purple
- CSP posted publicly for K-12 th grades 5 days prior to in-person instruction.	- CSP posted publicly for K-12 th grades 5 days prior to in-person instruction.	- CSP posted publicly for K-12 th grades 5 days prior to in-person instruction. -Schools may post the CSP while the county is in Purple tier.*	- Already reopened: CSP posted publicly by 02/01/21. - Not previously open: - CSP posted publicly for K-6, and submitted concurrently to LHD and State Safe Schools for All Team. - 7 business days for review. - 7 th -12 th grade reopening not permitted if in this tier. - K-6 th grade reopening not permitted if CR≥25*, though CSP can be posted and submitted for review. - Note: Targeted in-person instruction may be offered pursuant to the Cohorting Guidance.

5. How will the students be grouped for the cohorts?

As teachers are the most knowledgeable about the needs of their class and their individual students, teachers will have the flexibility to establish their cohorts of students for in person learning. Throughout the school year, the District has provided instructional priorities which still need to be addressed through either distance learning or in-person instruction. Based on the needs of an individual class, the teacher will identify how to best use the in-person instructional time and then identify how to group student cohorts most effectively according to the goals of the in-person time.

6. Just curious. Does the Coronavirus not exist between the hours of 1:00 to 2:30? Why can't we just go back already? Hybrid model, to me, is a few days a week and actually doing class at school not at home. One and a half hours after class?

We established the afternoon schedule to maintain three key priorities: 1) maintain current teacher and schedule for students, 2) increase instructional time with teachers by providing additional in-person instruction and 3) ensure families have the option to remain in distance learning with their current teacher. The afternoon schedule allows us to accomplish those priorities as well as limit possible transmission during unmasked eating time within the schools.

7. Thanks for working to get our kids back in school. They really need it for their mental health but I'm very worried as no one in our house is vaccinated yet. We all know by now that wearing masks is one of the best ways to stop the spread of COVID-19. We also know that it needs to be ALL parties wearing a mask especially the person with COVID-19 even if they are asymptomatic and don't even know it. We have also seen people out in the community who don't wear their masks properly. How will masking be enforced? Will students be required to have their masks fit properly and up over their noses? Will you require a certain type of mask? How about double masking as that is now being recommended particularly in light of all the new variants?

Fortunately, most school districts that are in session have seen compliance of their students wearing masks while attending in person instruction. With proper training and awareness, we believe our students will follow all masking guidelines as required. To ensure that all students are wearing their masks properly, we

will be releasing expectation videos as well as safety training materials for students prior to their return to the site.

While most students have their own PPE that they may use, PVUSD will also provide required PPE in accordance with CDPH guidance. Current CDPH guidelines define a face covering as “a material that covers the nose and mouth. It can be secured to the head with ties or straps or simply wrapped around the lower face. It can be made of a variety of materials, such as cotton, silk, or linen. A cloth face covering may be factory-made or sewn by hand or can be improvised from household items such as scarfs, T-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels.” PVUSD will provide an initial distribution of 2-3 reusable cloth masks per each student. There will be disposable masks available when needed at school or on the bus to replace or provide additional masks as needed. We will also distribute one face shield per elementary student for school use with a face covering. Students can use a combination of the disposable masks and cloth masks for double masking if you so choose.

8. When will substitute teachers be vaccinated? I've committed to a long term in person but will have to cancel if I can't get at least my first dose of vaccine? Why are subs so delayed if some will be on the job and in person?

All substitutes will receive a google form by 5pm on March 5th to sign up to pre-register for their vaccines. After they fill out the google form, they will be sent the pre-registration link which will begin the process for them to set up their vaccine appointments. If substitutes have already received their vaccine or received an email from the County Office of Education to schedule their appointment they do not need to use the PVUSD google form. Substitutes can contact Brian Saxton in Human Resources at 786-2145 if they have additional questions.

9. Why can't school reopenings happen on a case by case basis? PVUSD says the reason for delaying schools is because the district has 52% of covid cases but if you are looking at that level, then maybe you should consider going further into localities. Aptos is a smaller community than Watsonville and covid cases are likely to be the lowest in the entire county. So why not start in person schooling at schools located in Aptos? It will also allow PVUSD to get the necessary experience before opening some of the larger schools in the district.

While there are varying case rate levels within our District boundaries, we do have both staff and students moving throughout the District who live and are transported on buses within high case rate areas in both Santa Cruz and Monterey County. For example, Aptos High School serves 759 (55%) students who live outside of Aptos but within the Watsonville area. Valencia Elementary serves 167 (35%) students who live outside of Aptos but within the Watsonville area. At the same time, we have 1414 students living in Monterey County which currently has a higher case rate than Santa Cruz County. For this reason, we look at the combined case rate throughout the District to determine when the District as a whole will return to in person instruction.

10. What are the chances of opening fully in the Fall? Our family needs to make a decision ASAP regarding private school if PVUSD isn't going to be open full time.

With the promise of the vaccinations for the community which should continue to decrease the case rate, we are hopeful that we will reach the yellow tier and be able to bring all students back full time without the hybrid model due to the removal of the required 6 ft distancing. We should know more about the trajectories of case and vaccination rates by mid-May and be able to message more out to the community about future plans.