



# Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)  
Edition #48 – Week of April 19, 2021

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

**1. Will the three-foot distancing be a requirement for the 2021-2022 school year?**

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has stated that the majority of the current restrictions for school districts will stay in effect even after the removal of the colored tiered system on June 15, 2021. Therefore, we anticipate there will be physical distancing recommendations for the 2021-2022 school year. Currently, the CDPH has noted the following regarding physical distancing found in their [COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year](#) dated March 20, 2021:

*Maximize space between seating and desks. Distance teacher and other staff desks at least 6 feet away from student and other staff desks. Maintaining a minimum of 3 feet between student chairs is strongly recommended. A range of physical distancing recommendations have been made nationally and internationally, from 3 feet to 6 feet. Considerations for schools implementing a shorter physical distancing policy between students: focus on high mask adherence—if there are doubts about mask adherence, consider more robust physical distancing practices; consider enhancing other mitigation layers, such as stable groups or ventilation; maintain 6 feet of distancing as much as possible during times when students or staff are not masked (e.g., due to eating or drinking).*

As you will note, the guidance has now changed to maintaining the three feet of physical distancing as a strong recommendation rather than required. However, as the health and safety of our students, staff and families has been our number one priority, we will maintain the three feet of physical distancing to the greatest extent possible for the 2021-2022 school year.

**2. How will the District measure the three-foot distancing?**

PVUSD will measure the three feet according to CDPH guidelines (see the link in response to question #1) which is the distance from center of chair to center of chair. Therefore, there will not be three feet of distance between tables or desks.

**3. I see a lot of buses around town all day long. I thought that students were only in person during the afternoons. What are they doing?**

Our Transportation Department is hard at work providing continued transportation to hundreds of our students to Safe Space locations which have been open to students during distance learning time throughout the school year. In addition, some of our Special Education programming is occurring during the morning time. For example, our students in our Autism program are attending in-person instruction from 9:15-11:45am. Therefore, we are providing them transportation during the morning time. We appreciate the community's support in driving safely around school sites and buses. Now that all of our buses are back on the road, please watch for students walking to bus stops and adhere to bus stop signage and flashing lights.

- 4. I asked a question previously about traffic control that you answered. This week with second and third graders returning to campus I noticed that parents were not following the set drop off and pick up protocols, causing traffic to back up along Ohlone in both directions. What can be done to remedy this issue, especially with fourth and fifth graders starting? Staff is not telling parents to space out as they gather at the front of campus, or to follow drop off/pick up protocols.**

We have invited all of our students back now grades TK-12 grade so we will not have large numbers of additional students starting in-person learning next week. We have found that the process is quicker the second week as students and families become accustomed to the routines. That is one reason why we selected the staggered approach for return to in-person learning. Specifically, we are setting up additional cones and signage to help direct traffic flow, asking older siblings to accompany their younger siblings to smooth out some of the delays that happen on occasion, staggering our dismissal times and encouraging parents to pick up students at the front of the school. These changes and continuing communication about streamlining new health and safety routines should remedy the majority of the traffic concerns in future days.

- 5. Will high school students now attend school 4 days per week since the social distancing rules have been changed to 3 feet?**

Yes, all high school students have the option to attend four days a week with the change to the three feet of physical distancing. They should contact their counselor or school administrator for the change if they are not already attending four days a week.

- 6. Why are our teachers getting paid more to go back to school for 90 minutes of in person instruction? Other teachers in other districts are going back to full time in person teaching and are not getting any more money.**

Most school districts replaced distance learning with in-person learning time instead of adding on additional instructional time after distance learning. Due to the percentage of PVUSD families who wished to remain in distance learning as well as the need to increase instructional time to align with a normal instructional day, PVUSD and PVFT agreed to add additional instructional hours onto the already existing time and duties of teachers to be able to offer students additional instructional time. Therefore, teachers are being paid for two hours of additional time for each day they are providing afternoon in-person instruction over and above their required duties throughout the rest of the school year.

- 7. Looking at the future, housing construction will resume in our city, and more will come as I understand that there is a mandate to increase housing. How does the district coordinate student population growth and possible new construction of school facilities to accommodate this growth? Fortunately, at this time, the city council has former PVUSD educators that understand school issues. New schools take years of planning. What do you foresee happening to address this growth? How does district planning coordinate with the city? Thank you**

While this once was a concern, the State of California and many school districts within the County now have declining enrollment. PVUSD has had declining enrollment for the last three years, especially at the elementary level, therefore, we currently have additional space for new students within all of our schools. At a District level, we track housing developments within our district boundaries to forecast enrollment projections for upcoming years. In addition, a team from PVUSD, the City of Watsonville and Santa Cruz County Supervisors meet quarterly to discuss common issues such as possible student enrollment challenges through our Intergovernmental Committee Meeting.

- 8. I was unable to get my COVID vaccine when offered but would still like to get it. I am having a hard time finding availability on my own. Is the district able to assist me in any way? Thank you.**

Santa Cruz County has moved to issuing vaccines for anyone over the age of 16. If you are a member of the general public, you can schedule a vaccine with your doctor when you are ready. If you are a PVUSD staff

member or the spouse/partner or adult child of a staff member and need a vaccine appointment, you may use the link provided below for all registrants 18 or older: [sccoe.link/COEvax](https://sccoe.link/COEvax)

For any PVUSD student ages 16-18, you may use this link to sign up your child: [sccoe.link/studentvax](https://sccoe.link/studentvax). All registrants must be current students, have parent permission and be at least 16 years old. If you still need support with getting either your first or second dose of the vaccine, please contact Brian Saxton [brian\\_saxton@pvusd.net](mailto:brian_saxton@pvusd.net) in the Human Resources Department.

**9. How have you used federal and state funding to bring students back to the classrooms and are you planning to allocate funding to reduce class size to ensure secondary students can return to the classroom in fall full time?**

Yes, we are already hiring for the upcoming school year. We will use additional funding to reduce class size at the elementary and secondary levels to adhere to the three foot distancing recommendations and ensure students can attend full day, full time for the 2021-2022 school year.

**10. What are parents supposed to do about having less than 30 minutes to feed students and get them to class in the afternoon?**

Most sites begin afternoon instruction at or after 1:00pm which provides students with an hour to eat lunch and travel to their school site. For the five sites that have an early start of 12:35pm, the morning schedule has been modified to end at 11:30am or 11:45 am based on bus pick up schedules to provide that additional time. If an individual student needs additional time, the parent can work with the teacher to allow the student to leave distance learning with enough time to allow for the transition to in-person instruction.