



Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Edition #7 – Week of May 18, 2020

Questions are quoted as I received them directly from our community

1. What is being done to recognize and honor the Aptos High School graduating class?

All of our PVUSD Senior Class of 2020 will be recognized and honored with three important events: a Virtual Graduation, a Drive Thru Distribution Event, and a Physical Graduation Reunion in Winter or Spring of 2021. All graduation plans were reviewed for approval by the County Health Department to ensure compliance with Local Shelter in Place and State Stay at Home orders to safeguard our collective health and safety.

Between May 13-15, graduates received their caps, gowns and family yard decoration signs during our Ready, Set, Gown Event. The pick-up of these items occurred at Watsonville High School and Diamond Technology Institute on May 13th, Aptos High School and Renaissance on May 14th and PVHS, New School and PCCS on May 15th. As a result, students were able to wear their caps and gowns for their photos to be featured in virtual graduation. On June 1-4, graduates and families will participate in a 2020 Vision for Our Future: Honoring Our Graduates. This is a festive drive thru event in which members of the Senior Class of 2020 will be celebrated and receive a “Graduation Swag Bag” that contains their diploma cover, accomplishment medals/stoles, sashes and program.

From May 25-29, we will also be cheering on our 1,179 graduates through the launch of an official “Lights On Grads” and Yard/Door Decoration Event in which families and community members will be encouraged to decorate their yards, front doors, and use outdoor lights or hanging lights to symbolize their support for the Senior Class of 2020.

Be watching the virtual ceremony countdown clock soon to be posted on the PVUSD website. On June 5, 2020, we will hold the virtual graduation ceremonies for each high school in which each graduate will be recognized.

2. Will a new type of 6th grade graduation be available? Is it up to the school or district?

As physical promotion ceremonies are not possible, Elementary Schools will be having a virtual celebration to recognize their students’ accomplishments. Parents and students will receive information from their individual school sites with specific information on dates and times.

3. Why food services give out the same cereal every day. The cereal is not even good. If the state is paying for the food, it should be a better variety and healthier food. They should have granola bars or yogurts. Every week is the same menu. The only fruit they give is apples and oranges and no vegetables at all. This is community tax money and families deserve a healthy lunch.

PVUSD Food & Nutrition Services purchases around 6-7 varieties for breakfast cereals. We avoid the more sugary cereals and choose healthier varieties such as Chex cereal or Regular, Honey Nut or Apple Cinnamon Cheerios. Besides cereals, there are other types of items being served for breakfast such as fruit yogurt with a granola pack or heat and serve options such as mini pancakes or waffles.

For fruits, we serve fresh bananas, apples, tangerines, oranges and now are getting nectarines and peaches as we approach the summer stone fruit season. We are only serving whole fruit at this time since we are not having staff cut and serve items such as melons or strawberries, which we normally get this time of year under normal circumstances. Extra fresh fruit is now also available at 9 elementary schools through the "Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program" which serves each Wednesday through June 3rd through the support of a grant.

As for vegetables, we have been providing fresh baby carrots, fresh celery and broccoli. Under normal circumstances, we have a better variety of vegetables and we package up salads or have open salad bars, but those are closed due to the current health restrictions. We are only serving vegetables that we can purchase pre-packaged from produce companies in individual servings. Extra fresh veggies are also available weekly at Hall District through local donations.

4. Will there still be sports for middle schoolers like soccer basketball and more for the 2020/2021 school year?

We understand the importance of athletics for our students of all ages. With current health restrictions, we are not allowed to gather large groups of students and there is a requirement to physically distance six feet from each other. Therefore, we are not able to have any sporting activities at this time. If there is a loosening of health restrictions and we are able to identify ways to protect the health and safety of our students and staff, we will reinstate athletics.

5. I am a 72-year-old with diabetes, high blood pressure and asthma and I have a bit of the flu...but I want to do a Coronavirus test...Where can I have it done?

OptumServe, with support from the County of Santa Cruz and the City of Watsonville, has set up a free community testing site in Watsonville at Ramsay Park Family Center located at 1301 Main Street. Its hours of operation will be Wednesdays to Sundays from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. Testing services are by appointment only. Appointments can be made by visiting the following site and registering: <https://lhi.care/covidtesting>. Individuals without Internet access should call 888-634-1123 to arrange an appointment. Online reservations are strongly recommended.

6. As we begin planning for next year, I am concerned about the risk of exposure to the virus from being in the classroom with young students. What provisions will be made for certificated staff who

are in a vulnerable population due to age or condition who do not feel safe in the classroom setting yet are not ready to retire yet?

The health and safety of staff and students remain our top priority. Looking ahead, Cabinet and key administrators are engaging with both PVFT and CSEA representatives on contingency planning for the reopening of schools with continued focus on measures to protect the health and safety of students and staff while addressing the academic, social and emotional needs of our students. Moving forward, we will maintain compliance with county, state and federal regulations, such as Shelter in Place. This includes ongoing implementation of provisions in the negotiated agreements with PVFT and CSEA that include social/physical distancing, training and protective personal equipment. In addition, our Human Resources Department continues the oversight and adherence to the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)* effective from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. The *FFCRA* provides additional support to eligible employees, including those in the vulnerable population, that have health concerns and/or childcare issues. Human Resources staff facilitate the interactive process which involves individual meetings with employees and their supervisors to review the applicable leaves, such as those under *FFCRA*, and determine if any workplace accommodations and adjustments are needed.

7. What are the measures that you will take to protect the students in the schools from the Coronavirus? I hear that it is not a good idea to open schools this year as in the last several months of the year could be another outbreak of the virus, what can you tell me about that?

We are currently working with PVUSD Contingency Planning Teams to develop various scenarios according to health restriction protocols which may be in place at the time of school openings in August. We are taking actions predicated in science and following the established guidelines of the [Center for Disease Control](#) and the [County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency](#) to ensure that we meet the health needs of students and staff. These scenarios include both modified in-person class settings and distance learning and will include evidence-based public health measures at every school site and workplace.

8. For parents that are looking at keeping their child home even if there is a hybrid form of classroom and learning at a distance when the new school year starts, will you have a plan for students whose parents that aren't in a rush to send their students back because of Covid-19 and would rather continue long distance? Also, would they be able to hold their spot in their classroom? My son attends a charter school.

Yes. If we are able to have modified in-person classroom instruction, we will ensure that there are virtual options for parents and students that will continue with distance learning. In early August, you would need to consult with the charter school to determine space availability criteria.

9. My feeling, as well as many other parents, is that not much teaching is happening. Students are given lots of busy work without much instruction, kids are falling behind and just being pushed through. My kids are good students and I can tell the difference. I feel for those kids that need additional assistance that they are not getting help. If this does affect next year's school year, how will teaching be improved so our kids will not continue to fall very far behind?

PVUSD is working on a Reopening of Schools plan, which includes identifying and addressing the continuity of learning and improving the learning experience for students of all achievement levels. In doing so, we are creating systems to support how students and teachers engage with the instructional content. To help plan and implement best practices for next year, we have surveyed teachers and secondary students to identify the most engaging teaching methods, most useful feedback mechanisms and asked what is working and what is not. We will use this information to inform our plan. Additionally, our curriculum team has identified the standards that are most important for students to understand during the COVID-19 Distance Learning period. The focus on these standards will allow for simultaneous acceleration and remediation for students to stay on track.

10. My child needs information to register for Cabrillo College. We do not have information. Can you please help us?

Yes, our site administration, counseling departments and College and Career Centers are always available to support our students if you are having difficulty. Contact information can be found on your high school's website or by calling the main office. You may have to leave a message as office phones are staffed remotely certain days. Your child can apply to Cabrillo College through the following link: <https://www.cabrillo.edu/services/ar/registration/> . You will follow the steps on each page to move through the process. If you need additional Cabrillo assistance, you can contact the Cabrillo Admissions department. Phone numbers, emails and other helpful information is provided in this link:<https://www.cabrillo.edu/services/ar/> .