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Superintendent: Matt Doyle, Ed.D.

Board Members: Rich Alderson, Martha Alvarado, Debbie Morton, Rosemary Smithfield and Cipriano Vargas

Community Health Alert #8 - More Stringent Stay-at-Home Orders and New Temporary Grading Policy

April 12, 2020

Esteemed Parents, Students, Staff, and Community Members,

This is the eighth **Community Health Alert** regarding information about the coronavirus (COVID-19) and the proactive steps the Vista Unified staff is taking to ensure the safety of all students and adults, while maintaining a continuance of learning for all students.

All Vista Unified Schools will continue to remain closed until further notice. The orders from state and local governmental agencies are actually ramping up stay-at-home directives in an effort to minimize the spread of Covid-19. Below, you will read details about the new health and safety orders. We have also included in this alert a detailed update on the progress we are making with the Vista Virtual School system. While this pandemic is having a tremendous impact on the daily lives of students and families, the Vista Unified staff remain steadfast in their resolve to provide much needed support and relief to the community. I would like to personally thank every staff member for their dedication and hard work during these challenging times.

Vista Virtual School is a system of five key areas of support intended to provide remote access to a host of resources and learning experiences for all students. We have created a website to serve as the hub for our virtual learning system - www.vistausd.org/virtualschool. Please find below a simple outline of the virtual school system. For each component of the system, there is a contact phone number and email so that students and parents may call and speak to a person for customer service.

SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR VIRTUAL SCHOOL

VISTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

DR. MATT DOYLE, SUPERINTENDENT
WWW.VISTAUSD.ORG/VIRTUALSCHOOL

- INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS**
INSTRUCTION: Teachers are using Google Classroom, websites, videos, email, and other virtual tools to provide instruction, assignments, activities, and feedback. Visit the Vista Virtual School website for more information.
- SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT: School counselors, psychologists, and social workers have developed a menu of resources and will continue to provide support for students and families during this time. Contact them directly through email, or visit the Social and Emotional Support website.
- NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT**
NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT: Breakfasts and lunches will be distributed to students every Wednesday at six locations around the district. Visit the BlueCross Calix website for more details.
- HEALTH AND SAFETY SUPPORT**
HEALTH AND SAFETY SUPPORT: Student Support Services will continue to monitor the emergency and provide regular updates. Families can contact their school's nurse directly, with contact information listed on our Health & Safety website.
- TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT**
TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT: All students can have access to a device and internet connectivity. Contact your school directly for checkout information.

VISTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
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The following is a brief overview of the components of the Vista Virtual School. We use the term Vista Virtual School because our goal is to create a system of virtual supports that mirror the support systems that are in place when students are on campus.

Instructional Program Support

Our first week of the Vista Virtual School focused on getting students logged into the Google classrooms. Thanks to the hard work of teachers and support staff reaching out and making contact with students, we had over 74.5% of students in Vista Unified (more than 15,000 students) log-in to their teacher's Google classroom and start learning virtually. Students and teachers are building momentum with lessons and activities in this virtual environment. Each week will bring greater levels of sophistication as students and teachers expand their knowledge and comfort with the virtual learning environment.

In response to parent and student requests, we are in the process of purchasing real-time video tools for all teachers so that they may better connect with students and provide much needed real-time intervention in small groups. The security and implementation protocol of these tools is essential so that we can maintain a learning environment free from cyberattacks. I highlight the need for security because we need students and parents to help us be vigilant in following the rules and protocols provided by teachers. Unfortunately, there are nefarious actors on the internet that are waiting to take advantage of our efforts to actively include students in virtual learning environments. Through our collective efforts, we can be assured that students are safe. Thank you for your help and continued vigilance. I look forward to seeing teachers and students using real-time video conferencing in the coming days and weeks.

Temporary Grading Policy

Vista Unified will transition all students to credit/no credit grading for the duration of the school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On Thursday, April 9, 2020, the Vista Unified School Board voted to approve [Board Policy 6301](#): a temporary grading policy to address school closure due to the coronavirus pandemic, which outlines the temporary shift in grading practices during this time. In addition, we will be working collaboratively with principals and teacher representatives to develop an Administrative Regulation that outlines the specific guidelines for applying the credit/no credit grading policy at each grade level. This will include defining the criteria for assigning credit and no credit grades and establishing CIF eligibility using this temporary policy. We would also like to engage students and parents in the design of the administrative regulations. Click [HERE](#) for details and to provide your feedback.

Student Athletes

Perhaps one of the more frustrating consequences of the school closure is the impact on student athletes. As a father of three sons who were all student athletes and graduated from Vista schools, I understand the frustration not only for each athlete but also for their families. Each athlete has worked hard to prepare for a successful season, only to find it interrupted by the school closure.

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Recently, the CIF Commissioner for San Diego, Jerry Schniepp, published an [Open Letter to Student Athletes in San Diego](#) that officially canceled all high school sports for the remainder of the school year. We in Vista Unified recognize and value the effort, training, and dedication each student athlete invested in preparing for a successful spring season. We care deeply about your personal investment and share in your frustration. We have a team of teachers and administrators working to develop activities and celebrations that we all can join virtually in honoring our student athletes. More information will come on this project.

English Language Development

Vista Unified is committed to the academic and linguistic progress of our English Language Learners (ELLs) during this period. We have created [ELL School Resources](#), which lists activities and supports for our ELLs as they practice grade-level skills. Rafael Olavide is leading our collective efforts to ensure all teachers have guidance and support to create meaningful lessons and activities for English Language Learners. He has also worked with the San Diego County Office of Education to gather additional [Resources for English Learners by Language](#). In addition, Mr. Olavide continues to lead efforts to support all students enrolled in the Dual Language Program. Check out the [ELL webpage](#) for more details.

Special Education

In collaboration with our principals and general education curriculum design teams, our Special Education Department has been an integral part of the Vista Virtual School (VVS) development process. Embedded within Vista Virtual School are instructional tools, alternative lessons, and a wealth of resources to support our students' ability to access and tailor the learning opportunities to meet their unique needs.

As a department, we are committed to continuously improving upon our district's "Virtual Special Education Service Delivery Model" to meet the evolving needs of our parents, students, and community.

[This presentation](#) outlines the Special Education Department's past and current actions to support our parents, students, and staff as we continue to build and improve upon our virtual service delivery model and prepare to meet the needs of our students when they return to their traditional learning environments. This Q & A ([English/Spanish](#)) answers many of the questions our families may have at this time.

Social and Emotional Support

The entire counselor and social worker team (over 40 highly-trained professionals) have come together to develop a robust set of resources and supports for students and their families to address social, emotional, and behavioral challenges they may be facing during this time. Each of our social/emotional staff is actively reaching out to students and families every day to offer support and connect them with the resources they need. In addition to the individual outreach, the [Social and Emotional webpage](#) is packed full of great resources to assist students and families.

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Health and Safety Support

While the impact of Covid-19 on California and San Diego remains low in comparison to other states and cities, the number of cases in San Diego and, specifically, Vista continues to rise. As of April 9, 2020, there are 1,693 confirmed cases and 44 deaths in the county. There are 28 confirmed cases in Vista. As a result of the continued rise, Dr. Wilma Wooten from the SD County Health and Human Services Agency has expanded the countywide [health order](#) as of April 10, 2020 to the following:

All gatherings prohibited: "Any event or convening that brings together more than one person in a single room or single indoor or outdoor space at the same time, including people in multiple vehicles in one location."

There are specific exceptions for K-12 schools and school districts including: facilitating distance learning, school meals, health care, childcare for essential workers, and other activities essential to maintaining the running of the school district to provide for distance learning. The school district is also required to post [four essential rules](#) to be followed when any person enters a school campus during this pandemic.

The Vista Unified School District continues to proactively update all of the health and safety information on the [Health and Safety website](#).

Nutritional Support

Child Nutrition Services (CNS) continues to serve food by providing five days of breakfast and lunch for children under 18 years of age every Wednesday from 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at six locations. The CNS team has distributed 66,574 meals over the past three weeks. We have seen a consistent increase in demand for student meals weekly, with a 50% increase in demand last week alone. The CNS team will continue to work tirelessly to meet the nutritional needs of all children under 18 years of age. For more details, visit www.wavecrestcafe.com as well as WaveCrest's social media accounts.

Technology Support

Our main area of focus for the next two weeks is to ensure that all students have access to a computer device and the internet. Every school has a team that designed and is implementing a device distribution plan, which has been a huge success so far. Just this past week, Vista Unified schools passed out a combined 14,500 computer devices and 104 hotpots. More than 15,000 students logged on to a Vista Virtual School Google Classroom. Working collectively, we were able to identify that 685 students need support getting internet access. We are set to distribute an additional 497 hotspot devices to families next week to address the need for internet connectivity. We are on track to reach 100% of our students by the end of next week.

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Cox Communications pledges for the next 60 days to: “not terminate service to any residential customer because of an inability to pay their bills due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic; waive any late fees that any residential customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and open Cox WiFi hotspots to help keep the public connected in this time of need.” Please visit www.cox.com/hotspots for more information on Cox WiFi Hotspots.

The Cox Connect2Compete program is available to families who:

- have at least one child who attends a Vista Unified School,
- participate in one of these government subsidy programs: The National School Lunch Program, SNAP, TANF or Public Housing
- have not had Cox internet services in the home within the last 90 days.

If your household meets these criteria, you may qualify for discounted home internet service from Cox for just \$9.95 per month. For participating families, there are no deposits or annual contracts, and installation and in-home Wi-Fi is included at no additional charge. Find out if you qualify by visiting www.cox.com/c2c, or call 1-855-222-3252. Vista Unified is also committed to covering the cost of the internet services from Cox after the free trial expires.

The Vista Unified School District is committed to providing a robust set of support to students and families during this challenging health emergency. Please know that we will continue to expand our support systems based on feedback from the community.

We thank you for your continued cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Matt Doyle
Superintendent of Schools
Vista Unified School District



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