



COVID-19 Operations Written Report for Santa Cruz City Schools

| Local Educational Agency (LEA) Name | Contact Name and Title | Email and Phone | Date of Adoption |
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| Santa Cruz City Schools | Kris Munro Superintendent | kmunro@sccs.net (831) 429-3410 ext 220 | July 24, 2020 |

Descriptions provided should include sufficient detail yet be sufficiently succinct to promote a broader understanding of the changes your LEA has put in place. LEAs are strongly encouraged to provide descriptions that do not exceed 300 words.

Provide an overview explaining the changes to program offerings that the LEA has made in response to school closures to address the COVID-19 emergency and the major impacts of the closures on students and families.

All schools in Santa Cruz County closed beginning March 16, 2020. Upon the announcement of school closures, the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Department developed detailed Continuity of Learning plans for both elementary and secondary teachers.

During the week of March 16, elementary and secondary staff created plans and utilized professional development for teachers to prepare for the administration of online lessons and instruction beginning Monday, March 23--the first official week of distance learning for students.

During school closures, each site tracked student participation on Google Sheets and updated them weekly. Additionally, site administration followed up with students who had not engaged in distance learning via phone calls. Board Meetings became virtual and additional Board meetings may be added for July and August to respond to new needs as we approach a new school year.

As we pivoted to distance learning and worked to redesign teaching and learning, we were committed that every teacher, from Transitional Kindergarten to grade 12, would provide learning opportunities for their students. Our focus was to provide as much digital learning as possible so teachers, families, and students could adhere to shelter in place rules. In order to accomplish this goal, there were several needs:

1. Teachers expressed the need to be trained in how to deliver online curriculum and instruction. Though many teachers have advanced technical skills, delivering an entire class online is very different than using technology in the classroom. Four district teachers that are also site Tech Coaches provided voluntary virtual training on how to use Google Classroom, Google Meet, how to screencast, and a number of other topics to give teachers the professional learning needed to begin delivering instruction solely online. For three weeks, beginning the week of March 16th, the four teacher Tech Coaches conducted 22 formal trainings, with over 200 teachers in participation. Teachers have put their new learning to direct use as they provided students with digital access to learning. Teachers feedback was that these trainings were very impactful. Also impactful was the individualized help the teacher Tech Coaches have provided to their colleagues throughout the district.

2. Many students did not have access to a computer device and/or to the internet at their residence, which is now essential. Each school site designated times where disinfected Chromebooks were checked out to students who needed a device. Additionally, the district bought and deployed 500 WiFi hotspots from T-Mobile to provide families access to the internet. Additionally, information had been provided to families in Spanish and English about signing up for low cost internet and/or how to add a hotspot feature to one's phone, as a number of cellular providers have removed data restrictions to support families and students needing to access the internet for learning.

3. Remote tech support was needed to support students and the many varied tech issues that arise. To this end, the Instructional Technology (IT) department set up a phone hotline as well as a ticketing system so families can directly ask for tech support as needed.

Elementary:

Once training and devices were in place, teachers created content that would support the learning of their students. The focus at elementary was regular access to reading, writing, math, science, social studies and physical exercise to prevent “backslide” or loss of skills of students that are often seen during the summer because students are not engaged in continuous learning.

Lesson agreements were as follows:

- Grade levels should work together to create similar lessons for students.
- Work should be provided digitally as much as possible.
- Students should get a weekly schedule of assignments for Math, English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies and PE.
- Students should use the tracking form to write down what they do each day.

Ideally, lessons were work that students could complete individually or with minimal assistance.

Through platforms like Lexia (online reading and writing), EPIC (online books), Zearn (math), Benchmark Workshop (district's literacy adoption), FOSS Science Online, and a variety of other sources, students were expected to complete work each day as their teacher advised. Teachers posted a suggested schedule and list of activities for each day. There was a lot of variety in what each teacher's Google Classrooms looked like, but students had real opportunities to practice their skills each day. For grading, an ad hoc committee was formed with input from teachers. The committee streamlined and developed focused comments to communicate student effort and participation in distance learning. Additionally, teacher surveys were sent out. All committees included bargaining unit representatives.

Secondary:

In the Secondary Continuity of Learning Plan, it was agreed that teachers would create two lessons per week for each of their courses (because Santa Cruz High is on the Excel schedule, their teachers prepared four lessons per week for each of their courses), and that teachers would use either Google Classroom and/or email to send out their lessons and regular communication to students and parents.

Secondary teachers have worked collaboratively in their Professional Learning Communities to develop/modify lessons and existing curriculum to be accessible to students online. Like elementary, teachers first approached distance learning as a means to prevent "backslide" or loss of student skills during a short term school closure. Thus, teachers provided students with opportunities to practice skills already learned and/or provide opportunities for students to go deeper in their learning on topics already covered in the classroom. However, once school closures were extended, teachers were asked to determine the essential learnings for the next month and moved forward with new learning.

Additionally, secondary teachers kept track of which students were turning in assignments, participating in online discussions, virtual instruction, and/or virtual office hours, and which students were not turning in work and did not participate during instruction/office hours. Teachers reached out to students individually by phone and/or email. If students did not respond, each school developed a system for reporting the need for assistance in reaching out to these students. The district's goal was to keep students connected to school, their teachers, and classmates, and sites diligently worked to reach out to all students and provide additional support when possible.

A major topic of conversation among secondary educators was grading and assessing student learning during this time. Because distance learning was going to present a number of challenges for many students (and teachers), the approach to grading had to be an equitable one. To this end, Santa Cruz City Schools formed a secondary district grading committee. We looked to other districts, states, the Universities of California and California State Universities, and our own State Board of Education for guidance on grading, assessment of student work, and awarding credits for course completion. The district grading committee worked to develop student-centered, research-based, equitable practices for grading and assessing student work during school closures. Grading decisions were as follows:

Middle School Grading: Students will be assigned Pass/No Pass with distance learning specific comments.

High School Grading: Students were given the option between Credit/No Credit and/or Letter Grades for each completed course, including distance learning specific comments.

Special Education:

The Special Education Department created a comprehensive plan that detailed how services would be provided for students in the wake of school closures. The plan included the following agreements:

- The Special Education Department aims to give students tasks that they complete to keep them working toward their learning goals. Nothing replaces a teacher and classroom instruction, but it is imperative that students are in the habit of doing school work, thinking and reading, so when they are able to return to class, they haven't lost multiple months of growth.
- All Resource Specialist and Special Day Class secondary teachers will deliver instruction and class assignments utilizing Gmail and Google Docs & Drive as appropriate to your content and grade level.
- Resource Specialist AND Special Day Class Elementary teachers should be generating work related to Individual Education Plan goals to send home for continued practice in areas of need. Work should be provided to students in the same way that work is provided to general education peers.
- Provide 2 lessons/assignments/activities per instructional block per week for students.
- Teachers and Students will be responsible to log into their Google Account daily to send and receive assignments.
- Other service providers will work with families to provide services through a digital platform when possible (Occupational Therapy, Adaptive Physical Education, Speech), or provide alternative activities for service.
- Individual Education Plan meetings will be held digitally or over the phone.

Student Services:

The many student support and social emotional support services that Student Services Department delivers were crucial during school closures. School counselors and social workers developed a plan for outreach to high risk students. Other areas of focus included:

- Communication with nurses and health clerks regarding students with health conditions.
- Collection and sharing of community resources with the Student Services team staff.
- Preparation and implementation of Virtual Parent Network meetings to support SCCS families.
- Continued enrollment of students for the 2020-21 school year.
- Collaboration with school administrators and support staff on attendance protocols, specifically, how to reach students who were not participating in distance learning.

Provide a description of how the LEA is meeting the needs of its English learners, foster youth and low-income students.

Upon school closures, Santa Cruz City Schools adopted guidelines to frame planning and decisions adapted from the guidelines "No One Signed Up for This" by Brandon L. Bayne. These guidelines included operating with an equity lens, with the following beliefs:

- -The humane option is the best option.
- -We will make student centered decisions.
- -We cannot grade and hold students accountable in the same manner.
- -We will foster intellectual nourishment, social connection and person accommodation.

- -We will remain flexible and adjust to the situation.

All unduplicated students were offered Chromebooks and hotspots if needed. Each site implemented a process for outreach if students were not engaged in distance learning. There has been ongoing communication between the County Office of Education's foster youth liaison and our district's Director of Student Services to address the needs of all Foster Youth and to evaluate their academic progress. Additionally, home visits were conducted as needed. DELAC and ELAC committees continued to meet virtually and met more often. School Community Coordinators focused on supporting our Spanish speaking families and also increased the number of personal phone calls to each family asking if any supports were needed, and then connected families to resources.

Additional services included the following:

- "Grab and Go" brown bag meals
- WiFi connectivity via a hotspot or free service facilitated by district administration
- Home visits from Social Workers and Community Coordinators (bilingual)
- Delivery of Safeway gift cards to high need families
- Weekly Parent Support Network virtual meetings
- Continued virtual counseling for students in need
- Increased number of site ELAC meetings and moved meetings to a virtual format

All documents and communications were translated into Spanish for our Spanish speaking parent community.

Each site tracked student participation and outreach occurred with translation if needed. Teachers, counselors, Community Coordinators, Social Workers, site administration and district Student Services Director reached out either virtually, via phone or in person while practicing social distancing.

Social workers and mental health specialists facilitated weekly small group counseling for high school students struggling with anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation. Middle and elementary school counselors offered small group counseling session for students to offer support and stay connected to their peers. High school counselors reached out to 504 and other high risk student populations to provide counseling supports and referrals to appropriate community organizations. Student Services collaborated with Positive Discipline Community Resources to provide social emotional support to TK-12 families.

English Learners were given ELD support in small groups through Zoom or Google Meets with their teacher. Secondary students continued to receive Designated ELD instruction and many ELD teachers provided extra support to ELD students in their content area courses. Integrated ELD supports in content area courses were also included whenever possible during instruction/learning.

Provide a description of the steps that have been taken by the LEA to continue delivering high-quality distance learning opportunities.

All teachers committed to using Zoom or Google Meets to conduct regular meetings with their classes. Regular assignments and projects were posted on Google Classroom. All classes had at least one class meeting a week, and teachers met all students at least one more time, either in small groups or individually. In addition, for elementary students, materials were made available for pickup twice, to support the younger students with reading and writing materials.

Each site planned and coordinated pick up schedules to pass out Chromebooks and hotspots. Additionally, hardware was hand delivered if needed.

The following virtual trainings were provided to teachers by SCCS teachers, to ensure that teachers were able to deliver the highest-quality distance learning opportunities:

- Beginning Google Classroom
- Intermediate/Advanced Google Classroom
- Google Meet
- Zoom
- Illuminate assessments
- Castify - screencasting
- Google Forms as assessments/quizzes

Additional online licenses were purchased or procured (if free) and efforts in this area included:

- Teaming up with T-Mobile to utilize its EmpowerEd program to procure 500 hotspots to help bridge the equity gap and offer families Internet access at home.
- Purchasing additional iReady Math intervention licenses to support with distance learning.
- Sending out a message to leadership with an attached Chromebook replacement agreement stating all non-working or damaged equipment be returned to the site to be refurbished. The returned hardware was documented and replaced with a new working device.
- Providing two lessons each week by secondary teachers with a minimum of one synchronous lesson. Many teachers provided synchronous Office Hours as well.
- Using Google Classroom to post assignments and organize students' distance learning.

We engaged our community and sought feedback in these ways:

- Parent and Student Surveys, pre and post Distance Learning
- Parent Virtual Network
- Virtual DELAC, ELAC and School Site Council Meetings
- Special Education Parent Survey

Provide a description of the steps that have been taken by the LEA to provide school meals while maintaining social distancing practices.

Site and locations were based on prior daily participation and the highest free and reduced rates for our district. We provided both a cold breakfast which could be eaten the next day and a daily hot lunch. We also packed a bag for the weekend that consisted of two additional breakfast and lunch options. For the spring break week we packed a bag to cover all seven days both breakfast and lunch. Mass communication went out via email, parent newsletter and department, and was posted on all district websites while electric signage and fliers were displayed at school sites. The district also implemented the Seamless Summer Option and the non congregate feeding waiver and then applied for the program area eligibility waiver and a local school wellness policy assessment waiver.

The following Health and Safety protocols were in place:

All staff

- Washed hands on arrival and often throughout shift.
- Wore facial coverings which the District provided.
- Wore gloves while working with food or serving food and to change gloves when contact areas change.
- Maintained six feet social distancing when possible.
- Were to report any illness and to stay home if ill.

Additionally, all contact surfaces are cleaned with the change of job duty or task, and all kitchens were cleaned and sanitized daily after every use. Both verbal instruction and signage was provided to the staff at the serving locations. A ServSafe certified food service worker was also at the location to provide oversight and enforcement of food safety regulations and the meal count.

Meals were distributed daily between the hours of 11am and 1pm. Depending on the location and flow of traffic the meals were given by a grab and go style and/or drive up style. At both locations the food was always packed and set on a tray to pass or separate table for pick up. We consistently served 1250- 1300 meals daily, and over 71,500 meals served during the pandemic.

Provide a description of the steps that have been taken by the LEA to arrange for supervision of students during ordinary school hours.

Families can contact CDRC to request referrals to child care programs through the website: cdrc4info.org.

- We partnered with several service providers to offer our students and staff not only Chromebooks and hotspots, but also utilized Lightspeed's Content Filter to keep our district Children's Internet Privacy Act (CIPA) compliant.
- We procured 500 T-Mobile hotspots that instantly delivered Internet access to families to help with distance learning.
- With the help of Cruzio, we recently completed a public wireless drive-up service (in parking lots) at three of our school campuses: Soquel High School, Santa Cruz High School, and Branciforte Small Schools.
- Google Suite offered various cloud services that included Classroom, Meet, and Voice.
- Clever for Education helped with single sign-on for applications, along with creating class rosters for all our Google Classrooms.

The Boys and Girls Club of Santa Cruz County was the local option for supervision of the children of essential workers. School Community Coordinators worked with families to find services for childcare, as well as food and shelter if needed.