



Denair Unified School District

Community • Excellence • Commitment

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FAQs

Here are updated answers to many Frequently Asked Questions about the Denair Unified School District and the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.

When will school begin?

Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2020

How will classes be conducted?

Based on guidance from the Stanislaus County Health Department, we and all other public and private schools in the county will begin the year under a distance learning model. Classes will be held online in both “live” interactions and with assigned work. At the elementary school level, some paper packets may still be issued depending on grade level.

What will be the difference between distance learning now and last spring?

With additional time for planning, DUSD will organize a more structured distance learning experience than during the spring, when schools were closed with very short notice. We will clearly communicate all expectations for students, including work completion that will contribute to both grades and attendance, and what families can expect from us. Distance learning will include:

- Daily interaction and teaching from credentialed teachers through technology while students learn from home
- Attendance will be kept
- Grades will be assigned at all levels
- Integrated social emotional learning
- Student engagement through instructional best practices and interactive technology
- Targeted intervention and enrichment
- Availability of school resources such as library books and counseling services.

We also will provide teacher training specifically designed to help them deliver engaging, high-quality lessons in a distance learning environment.

We are currently working with our team of stakeholders to consider many of the details, including how to support students with disabilities, English learner services, and address students’ emotional and behavioral needs.

How long will distance learning last?

Indefinitely. Stanislaus County currently is on the state's "watch list." The county must be off the watch list for 14 consecutive days before schools can consider having in-person classes. The determination to resume face-to-face classes will be made by Stanislaus County health officials in consultation with local school superintendents. Allowing students and staff back on campus – most likely under a hybrid model of instruction -- will happen only when it is deemed safe to do so based upon COVID-19 statistics in this county.

Can you delay the opening of school?

Starting later this year would mean classes would last longer into next summer. We are required by the state to have 180 days of instruction. Our plan remains to begin instruction Aug. 12.

Will there be a daily schedule for distance learning?

Our principals are working with our teachers to develop schedules for each grade level. We anticipate most online instruction will take place in the morning. Students would then have time to complete assignments and projects. Teachers are likely to have "office hours" in the afternoon – a time to work individually with students, talk with parents and prepare future lessons. We believe it is important to develop a routine for learning. We also recognize this is hard on parents. If you find something isn't working for you or your child, please talk to your teacher or principal.

How much time can I expect my child to be in school each day?

The state has established minimum amounts of time for students. Those are:

- **3 hours a day** for transitional kindergarten and kindergarten
- **3½ hours a day** for grades one through three
- **4 hours a day** for grades five through 12

Those are minimums; many of our students are likely to spend more time on their studies and interacting with their teachers. We want enough live instruction so students can accomplish the work that is assigned without too much additional assistance.

Will every student be assigned a Chromebook computer?

That is our goal. We have ordered more Chromebooks, but not all are here yet. Devices will be issued at Coyote Call (DHS/DMS), Round Up (DECA), Orientations (DCA) and the first few days of school. We ask the community to be patient. Parents will be required to fill out a technology registration form online or by paper. It will ask about Internet access at the home, how many district students live there and how many devices are available. We are asking parents to partner with us as we wait for more devices. If your child has a device at home, please help us by allowing us to first give devices to students who do not have them at home.

What will happen to the Dual Language Immersion program at Denair Elementary Charter Academy?

The popular Dual Language program at DECA will continue. We recognize this will be challenging for our students. We want them to successfully remain in the program so our teachers are determining how best to support them in both languages. When we resume face-to-face classes, we will make adjustments to catch students up, as necessary. We also are working to incorporate our Language lab into our distance learning program.

Will there be packets of assignments distributed for elementary students that parents must pick up and drop off?

Likely. We recognize that not all lessons can be delivered online, especially for younger students. As we did in the spring, some assignments will be available for parents to pick up and return. We will make it as easy as possible so parents do not need to get out of their cars.

What about preschool?

Preschool is a separate state-run program, but will follow the elementary model of instruction (distance learning to start). You may place your child on the County Eligibility list by calling (209) 238-6400 or online at www.findchildcarestanislaus.org.

My son/daughter is a high school senior. Will there still be college guidance available?

Yes. Our high school counselor and staff will be available to discuss college applications, financial aid and how to apply for scholarship. We encourage students and parents to reach out and make an appointment to get their questions answered.

Can my child still check out a book at the campus library?

Yes. Books are available for checkout. But while we are distance learning, students cannot study in the library or stay to use a computer. Please contact your campus to set up make arrangements to check out a book.

Will you monitor cyberbullying?

Yes. We have district policies governing appropriate conduct online. Teachers will be monitoring student interaction. Teachers will address this as part of their distance learning overview.

Will schools provide supplies (pencils, markers, paper, etc.) for families unable to afford them?

Yes. Teachers will communicate with families.

What would a hybrid learning model look like?

When local health conditions allow distance learning to be relaxed, it's very possible that students will return to face-to-face instruction on campus only one or two days a week, with distance learning still in place the rest of the time. Again, the time frame will be determined locally based on COVID statistics in Stanislaus County.

We continue to work on the details regarding a hybrid learning model. In one scenario, students would have distance learning at home three days a week. Half would attend class Monday and Tuesday, and have distance learning Wednesday through Friday. The other half would have distance learning Monday through Wednesday, and attend class Thursday and Friday. This would allow us to reduce class sizes and maximize social distancing within classrooms.

When students and staff are on school campus, will they be required to wear face coverings?

Yes, based on current state orders. Face coverings are required for everyone over the age of 2 unless they have a medical reason that prevents them from wearing them.

What about the food program?

As we did in the spring when distance learning began, we expect to be able to provide free breakfasts and lunches to all students. Meals would be distributed by our food service staff in the middle school parking lot on a regular schedule. We will provide more details soon.

If students return to campus, we will provide more “grab and go” and prepackaged hot and cold meals to avoid crowded lines in cafeterias. There will be no buffets or salad bars. Students will be encouraged to maintain social distancing while eating indoors and outdoors. During bad weather, we may need to expand indoor eating into our gymnasiums.

What should I expect if my child rides the bus?

When classes are held on campus, the district provides transportation to students who live outside of our walking distance boundaries. Because buses are not well ventilated and put students in close quarters with each other, students who ride the bus will be required to use hand sanitizer as they enter the bus and wear a face covering for the entire time they are on the bus. Siblings must sit together. Fewer students may be allowed on busses to maintain better social distancing, which may adjust routes or walking distances. We will announce more information before face-to-face classes resume.

What happens if a student or staff member tests positive?

If a student or staff member tests positive for the coronavirus, we will work directly with county health officials to determine a plan to protect the health of other children and adults who have possible exposure to the infected person.

Will there be sports, FFA, clubs and other extracurricular activities?

All sports, clubs and extracurricular activities have been indefinitely postponed. If students return to campus, we plan to allow clubs and activities in which all of our safety precautions can be followed. For example, the yearbook and gardening clubs probably can meet without much risk, but we won't be having any assemblies, rallies or dances at the beginning of the year. The California Interscholastic Federation – which governs high school sports – has pushed fall sports back to late December and early January. Winter and spring sports will be held at the same time next spring, if health conditions allow.

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