



MARK WEST UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Rachel Valenzuela
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Regina Cuculich

Mark West Union School District FAQs for Parents 7-28-20

Distance Learning Model

1. Will Distance Learning be the same as it was in the spring (March - May), or will it be different? If different, how so?

A: The Distance Learning experience will be different from that in Spring 2020. At that time, within 2 weeks, the district needed to quickly transition from an in-school instructional model to a distance learning model. During the 2-week transition period, schools worked quickly to train staff on digital platforms and change their in-person instructional approaches and materials to online methods. We applaud our staff's efforts in rising to that challenge.

The Distance Learning model that will be implemented in the fall is an improvement over our first experience. A committee has worked over the entire summer to create a robust Distance Learning program that incorporates regular live interaction between teacher and students, rigorous lessons comparable to in-person instruction, online student engagement activities, student small group/individual work, student attendance tracking, assessment/grading of student work, and breaks during the instructional day.

Please note the key features of Distance Learning:

- Daily online learning from home
- Teacher directed model
- Online student interactions
- Instruction primarily in ELA and Math, with some integration of social studies, science and other subject areas
- Students utilize their grade level textbooks, workbooks, and materials, including an electronic device if needed.
- Possible: work packets to supplement, however, the bulk of the work is online.

2. How much time will students and their teachers spend online, and will there be breaks or will students be expected to sit for hours at a time?

A: At a minimum, the Distance Learning Model will meet state criteria for required school instructional minutes, which are 180 minutes for Kindergarten, 230 minutes for grades 1-3, and 240 minutes for grades 4 and above.

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Each class will receive direct teacher instruction online on content that is standards-aligned. Online class time will include small group guided instruction, individual follow-up and check-ins, checking for understanding/assessment with breaks during the day. The goal will be to blend online lessons/activities with offline learning activities. Staff are currently working on distance learning schedules that will be shared with parents by each school site.

3. Can you clarify if instructional minutes means students are online for those amount of minutes?

A: A student's school day will total a minimum of 180 daily instructional minutes if they are in Kindergarten, 230 daily minutes in grades 1-3, and 240 daily minutes in grades 4 and above. This means the combination of instructional activities built into the day's lessons, such as direct teacher instruction, independent student work, student small groups (breakout rooms), other forms of student engagement, and support teacher/specialists' time, in total will be equivalent to the minimum required daily instructional minutes.

4. Will there be packets of work as well as computer learning?

A: While the bulk of Distance Learning will occur online, there may also be supplemental paper packets of work for some grade levels. Also, English/Language Arts and math textbooks and workbooks will be used.

5. Is there homework as well as distance learning?

A: Yes, homework will be assigned to students. This will be work that students are responsible for completing outside of regular school hours.

6. Will students who see a specialist (reading, special education, counselor, and/or English Language Development) still have access to the special services they need?

A: Yes, students who receive specialized support will continue to receive support during Distance Learning, and this support will be in an online format.

7. How will students be held accountable for their school work?

A: One of the biggest changes to Distance Learning this fall is student accountability. Teachers will be monitoring student progress, providing feedback to students, grading, and using student assessment to inform their instruction. Parent communication will occur by teachers and principals on a bi-weekly basis. Students will receive a report

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card each trimester, or quarter if attending MWCS.

8. Since we are a small district, do we have a greater chance of returning to campus than larger districts when it is safe?

A: On July 17, 2020, Gov. Gavin Newsom represented a significant shift from local control of reopening efforts, to statewide directives meant to address the health and safety concerns presented by a significant rise in COVID-19 cases. Based on the new guidance, all schools must remain in distance learning at least until the county has been off the state's watch list for 14 days. At the point during which we are informed that we may offer in-person learning, we will take steps toward a safe reopening and will give parents ample advance notice.

Hybrid Model

9. If there are Monday holidays in the Hybrid model, will Group A (Monday/Tuesday group) attend Wednesdays on those weeks?

A: Yes, if Monday holidays interfere with the Monday/Tuesday cohort of the Hybrid model, the cohort will shift to Tuesday/Wednesday of that week.

10. How many hours will students have with their teacher conducting instruction each day under the Hybrid model?

A: The Hybrid model will follow the state's requirements for school instructional minutes, which are 180 minutes for Kindergarten, 230 minutes for grades 1-3, and 240 minutes for grades 4 and above. During the in-school days, the class will receive in-person direct teacher instruction on content that is standards-aligned. In-person class time will include small group guided instruction, individual follow-up and check-ins, checking for understanding/assessment, and breaks during the day. The distance learning portion of the week will be connected to the in-person instruction and will form a continuous learning cycle. Staff are currently working on Hybrid schedules that will be shared with parents by the school.

11. I am wondering about staggered pick up times in the Hybrid model. I have a first grader and a fifth grader. Are there ways to put the release times closer together?

A: Staggered pick up times are meant to minimize the amount of students gathering in the pick up locations around the school. If families need to pick up more than one child, the school will coordinate the release of all students

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within one family to occur at the earliest pick up time. This will eliminate the need for the parent to come more than once during pick-up times. Please contact your school principal if you have other special circumstances related to pick-up times.

Home School (district program)

12. What is the curriculum?

A: All of our district program options will use the district-adopted common core-aligned curriculum for each grade level in math and English language arts. As such, families that have opted for home schooling will be using the following programs: Math Expressions (K-6), Big Ideas for math (gr.7-8), Wonders for English language arts (TK-5), and StudySync for English language arts (gr.6-8). The curriculum and assignments will be provided to the family by the home school teachers, who will be reviewing, grading, and assigning student work every two weeks.

13. How many daily instructional minutes, conducted by the parents, will be required if we choose the Home School Model?

A: Like the other two models, the Home School model will also follow the state's required instructional minutes, which are 180 minutes for Kindergarten, 230 minutes for grades 1-3, and 240 minutes for grades 4 and above. If parents have selected this option, the home school teacher will be contacting them to review and sign an independent study contract. Assignments will be listed and the district's home school teacher will write the estimated work time for each assignment. Assignments will be due to the teacher on a biweekly basis. Teachers will evaluate the work completed and assign a grade as well as confirming attendance based on completed work. However, it is important to note that individual student performance may yield a more rapid or slower completion of assignments. Parents will facilitate their child's learning and write down the actual work time on the contract. Parent-teacher communication will be vital to determine the amount of work that is appropriate for students and that meets the intent of the state requirements.

Other:

14. When do I have to decide on one of the three models?

A: The district conducted a survey and made phone calls to families regarding which learning model they would prefer. There were many families whom staff were unable to reach. If contact was not made with you, please contact your school immediately and inform them of which model you would like for your children. While students will be starting with the Distance Learning model (and Home School model), we continue to prepare for our eventual return to campuses under a Hybrid model.

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