

QUARTERLY ECHO

ALUM ROCK UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT



SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATES

"New beginnings are often disguised as painful endings." (Lao Tzu). As I prepared to come back to work on January 3, 2022, this message popped on my computer. It is one of the hundreds of random messages we receive because we belong to different virtual groups. However, this message resonated with me. We are experiencing the very painful ending of learning to live with a new virus. It has affected all of us in so many different ways. However, we must look forward to a new beginning. Our district has developed a tremendous resilience. Our students have learned to cope with tremendous losses and to live in a new school reality. Their readiness to learn, to play, to keep on going inspires me. It is because of them that we need to be hopeful and ready for a New Beginning.

In Service,
Hilaria Bauer, Ph.D.
Superintendent

COVID EXPOSURE PROCEDURES

If your child has had a COVID exposure please follow the recommendations below:

1. If the student has symptoms (regardless of whether or not they are fully vaccinated), they will need to be tested for COVID-19 and be excluded from campus for 5 days. If the test on/after Day 5 is negative, they are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) & symptoms improve, the student can return to school.

2. If the student has no symptoms, and both the COVID-19 positive person and exposed student were wearing masks during exposure, the student must get tested on/after Day 5 of the exposure. The student can remain at school while waiting for the return of COVID-19 test results, but should not participate in outside extracurricular activities (i.e. sports, dance, etc.). If the test taken is negative, the student may remain on campus. Monitor student for symptoms. If no test is done by Day 5, the student has to remain isolated at home for the remainder of the 10 days quarantine.

3. If either the COVID-19 positive person or the exposed child/youth were NOT wearing masks during exposure, the child/youth must quarantine for 5 days and test on/after Day 5 is negative (or 10 days if no on/after Day 5 test).

**PCR, Antigen or FDA-approved antigen home tests may be used to return to school after quarantine or isolation.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The Social Emotional Learning Department would like to give a brief snapshot of our efforts to support all of our schools in cultivating caring, safe, inclusive and welcoming environments where our students, families and staff learn, grow, and thrive.

In collaboration with the State & Federal Programs department and the Business Office, our district hired eight new counselors for our elementary schools in order to provide mental wellness, social emotional learning, and academic support for students.

Our schools continue to incorporate social emotional learning during the instructional day through various approaches such as Kimochis, Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS), Second Step, and/or restorative practices. We are committed to educating our students holistically through different methods.

Additionally, some of our certificated staff and administrators have participated in our Trauma Informed Competency professional development series in understanding how trauma impacts student learning and development and strategies to support students who may be in trauma response.

Finally, we have had a very good number of parents participate in workshops to learn about the five social emotional learning competencies as identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). To date, we have covered social awareness, self-management, and relationship skills.

We invite all parents to participate in our upcoming SEL workshops in 2022: February 8th (English) and February 9th (Spanish) on self-awareness and April 6th (English) and April 7th (Spanish) on responsible decision making. Registration information will be sent out to all parents via Parent Square. We look forward to seeing as many of our parents at our next SEL workshops.

If you would like more information on social emotional learning and mental wellness support and additional resources, please visit <https://www.arusd.org/district/departments/instructional-services/social-emotional-learning>.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The Visual and Performing Arts Department is proud to share that despite many challenges posed by the pandemic, we have continued and expanded our in-school programming. Students across the district are expressing themselves and developing their artistic voices every day.

Our instrumental music program is up and running at all school sites thanks to the dedication of our music teachers. Students are utilizing music-specific PPE to keep everyone safe while playing instruments. A few of our band programs even held winter concerts for their fellow classmates!

The annual Winter VAPA Showcase was completed virtually this year and highlighted visual art projects across Joseph George, Linda Vista, Lyndale and Cureton. You can check out the showcase on our arusd website under "The Arts." The Spring VAPA Showcase will take place in late April and the format is still pending.

Our Mariachi and Jazz Band programs are supporting students across the district to advance their musical knowledge after school. In addition to our long-standing programs, we have added visual arts classes at 7 of our elementary schools creating a total of 9 schools with visual arts instruction TK - 5th grade!

Finally, in collaboration with our SEL department, we have announced our first annual "Collection of Greatness." All students are encouraged to submit a work of creative expression that will be showcased in a virtual collection in early May. Our goal is to celebrate the unique identities, talents and passions of our student body. Fliers have been sent out via ParentSquare and can also be found on the arusd website under "The Arts."

TECHNOLOGY UPDATES

Alum Rock continues to raise the bar in serving all students through progressive integrated technology! As our Academic Service department teams with our Informational Technology department to assure reliability, access and progress, fantastic work is underway.

Seven Alum Rock Schools continue to partner with Verizon Innovative Schools (VILS). From successful alumni status, to extended partnerships and hotspot distributions, VILS in Alum Rock certainly motivates exciting Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) learning opportunities. As three Verizon innovative Learning Labs (VIL) are already in full swing, a school was just approved for a 2022 Verizon Immersive Media Lab!

In accordance with Verizon Innovative Learning Schools', *K-12 Leaders' Guide to Successful Technology Integration*, six elements drive a sustainable culture of "powerful learning that leverages technology." Our Alum Rock Educational Technology Plan intentionally reflects those elements of shared leadership, transformation, professional development, access, stakeholder engagement and equity.

Tech Teams have been established to drive the work. Site representative liaisons are in position to support districtwide efforts of aligned practices and a Tech Lead team, composed of teachers, principals, and district office staff has worked so far this year to develop our tech integration plan, assess our immediate needs, and create actionable next steps including streamlining reliable access, and supporting professional development with educational technology.

In October, the team launched THRIVE: an on-line, learning platform that supports professional development of our Alum Rock teachers and staff. Principals and site representatives have led teachers through the platform where chosen opportunities are rewarded with points and badges. To kick-off the fun, a THRIVE hoodie will be awarded to those who accepted the optional "December Dive-In Challenge!" Already, over 300 Alum Rock Stars have engaged in learning!

We remain ever inspired by our Alum Rock teachers' exceptional commitment to, and competence in teaching and learning to empower our young tech leaders of the future!

As we continue to work toward the most progressive integration of technology at all school sites, we are committed to meeting your technological needs with reliability and success. Please reach out to your school site leader for support as needed. Should you require further assistance, we are here in service! IT Helpline:408-928-6917.

"K-12 Leaders' Guide to Successful Technology Integration." Digital Promise Verizon Innovative Learning Schools, 8 June 2021, <https://verizon.digitalpromise.org/elements-of-success/>.

STUDENTS IN ACTION

