

COVID-19 Operations Written Report



Local Educational Agency (LEA) Name	Contact Name and Title	Email and Phone	Date of Adoption
Sacramento City Unified School District	Jorge Aguilar, Superintendent	superintendent@scusd.edu , 916.643.7400	June 25, 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.

Following close consultation with Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH) officials, SCUSD closed all schools on Monday, March 16, 2020. School closures in SCUSD have impacted students and families greatly, exacerbating existing inequities and presenting new challenges. With a student population comprised of over 70% socioeconomically disadvantaged students, ~14% students with disabilities, and ~18% English Learners, the closure of physical school sites and transition to a distance learning model has major implications for access to key resources/supports and engagement in the learning process.

The closure of schools has impacted many students and families by challenging their ability to access basic services. The broader economic impacts of the pandemic, including increased unemployment, have amplified these challenges. To maintain access to meals for those dealing with food insecurity the district has, with less staff and at fewer sites, continued to provide meals at pre-pandemic levels. To implement distance learning, over 25,000 Chromebooks have been distributed and the district is facilitating access to wifi/broadband through local partnerships.

Families and students have also been impacted by the physical separation from targeted supports and services. Staff supporting English Learners, Foster Youth, Homeless Youth, and Students with Disabilities have all shifted their service delivery models. For example, Special Education staff have received guidance outlining the need to continue meaningfully engaging parents/guardians, 'pushing into' virtual classroom activities, supporting students in their online coursework, conducting consultations/counseling sessions via videoconference or telephone, aiding students in the use of assistive technology, making materials available in a variety of formats, and supporting caregivers to deliver instruction at home. Additionally, training in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) was selected as a module for ALL teachers as part of their professional development prior to the launch of distance learning.

Students and families have also been impacted by the isolation and disconnection resulting from physical and social separation from the classroom and school community. To assess needs and facilitate connection, a Student Engagement Survey has been implemented across grades. The survey and targeted outreach actions, including home visits with appropriate safety protocols, are enabling staff to reconnect with students who have yet to be engaged. The district has also implemented a four-question Social Emotional Learning (SEL) check-in/survey that is providing staff valuable data to inform immediate supports and plan for school re-opening. To support the health and well-being of all, a virtual calming room has been created. This website features

supportive and healing tools and strategies to help students, families, and community members manage emotions and feelings. A 'Wellness Warmline' has also been established that allows for students and family to receive direct referral to district staff including school nurses, student support services, Foster Youth Services, and Homeless Youth Services.

As school closures have disrupted curriculum pacing and removed students and staff from their established classroom environments, the district has identified essential standards across subject areas and grade levels. These standards, and additional curricular resources, focused distance learning on key academic outcomes for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. To address the numerous impacts of school closures on graduation, college application/eligibility, and matriculation through course pathways, the district has implemented a grading policy that ensured students were 'held harmless' for the time of closure. Students cannot receive a grade lower than that earned prior to the time of closures, though they can improve their grade.

The impacts on students and families as a result of school closures are significant and changing over time. As the national, state, and local contexts evolve during the pandemic, SCUSD will continue to conduct needs assessments and adjust program offerings as appropriate. To support this process, the district has established a School Closure Dashboard that is tracking, in real-time, key system processes from the date of closure. Data being monitored include metrics for student engagement, academic achievement, human resources, and food services. This includes monitoring the number of students who are newly eligible for Free/Reduced lunch status following March 1, 2020. SCUSD is committed to making data-driven decisions that enable the district to continuously improve in its ability to meet the needs of students and families in the immediate future and for the long-term.

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

To meet the needs of unduplicated students, SCUSD is extending targeted supports into the distance learning context, reaching out directly to students, and monitoring student engagement and well-being to identify and respond to needs. The closure of schools and transition to a distance learning model has highlighted existing inequities and, in some cases, widened gaps. This is particularly true for unduplicated students, who have been overrepresented in the 'unreached' group of students during distance learning, are more likely to experience technology gaps, and require instructional/other supports that are still being adapted to the remote context. SCUSD acknowledges the urgency and critical importance of fully engaging and providing necessary supports to unduplicated students and will continue efforts to meet the needs of English Learners, Foster Youth, Homeless Youth, and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students during the time of school closures.

English learners' needs are being met by providing professional learning to staff, outlining key standards and instructional practices, and providing direct support to staff. Essential ELA, Math and ELD standards to be addressed have been outlined and communicated, along with corresponding core curricular materials, to support their study. Seven ELD training specialists (Instructional coaches) provide direct support to teachers and administrators as they serve ELs virtually, including use of the Universal Design for Learning framework when planning to ensure that EL needs are addressed throughout core lessons. Professional learning for teachers specific to the use of distance learning platforms with English learners was built into Phase 1 of the distance learning launch plan. A repository of web pages, web-based services, and other resources for teachers to support their ELs is available.

Foster Youth continue to receive support services from staff. Case management services, including daily check-ins, are ensuring that students have access to Chromebooks, are actively engaged in distance learning, and can discuss their current health and wellness. Foster Youth attendance is monitored and intentional outreach is made to the families of students with more than 3 days of non-participation. Students continue to receive tutoring services virtually and will also be provided access to summer programming and credit recovery as needed. Transition support for graduating seniors is being provided and includes communication with college representatives to ensure students are on track with application and enrollment processes. Staff have also continued to enroll new Foster Youth, facilitate access to the district's meal service, make referrals to district and/or community resources, and support students in obtaining vital documents.

With over 70% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch, SCUSD has focused on meeting the needs of low-income students from the earliest stages of the pandemic. Cross-departmental efforts have resulted in a meal distribution process that is operating at pre-COVID levels with less staff and at fewer sites. Over 25,000 Chromebooks have been distributed to students who need devices in order to access distance learning. Partnerships with the city and local businesses have resulted in additional meal/food distribution, 'super hotspots' in wifi-equipped buses, and free internet access for eligible families. Staff continue to support low-income students by providing referral to resources as individual needs are identified. This is done by teachers directly and/or through referral of students/families to site administrators, the district's Connect Center, school-based Student Support Centers, and other departmental staff.

To specifically meet the needs of Homeless Youth, staff continue to implement targeted efforts to identify, connect with, and provide support to students and families experiencing homelessness. School staff are provided regular reminders to refer families/students to homeless services when identified. Homeless Services staff regularly collaborate with local shelters, county school districts, and county agencies to monitor and identify students. Outreach, case management, and health and welfare support is provided by a social worker designated specifically for Homeless Youth support. Staff continue to partner with schools to resolve lists of 'unreachable' students so that these students can be engaged in distance learning. Staff are also assisting with access to wifi for our students experiencing homelessness, including providing hotspots as needed to ensure full access to distance learning.

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

To effectively deliver instruction through a distance learning model, SCUSD has provided professional learning for staff, defined essential learning standards, and implemented a hybrid, flexible instructional model.

Prior to the formal launch of distance learning, teachers completed three phases of professional learning. The first of these provided a grounding in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) including instructional mindset and lesson design. The second phase familiarized staff with the range of distance learning tools to be used in delivering instruction. This included a specific module focused on support and accessibility tools for students with disabilities. The third phase provided grade-level specific guidance to teachers on essential standards, curricular materials, and instruction for students with disabilities and English Learners. Teachers are continuing weekly collaboration sessions to share best practices and support peers. Also included in phase three was guidance (in the form of an exemplar lesson outline) for integrating Social Emotional Learning (SEL) into academic content for distance learning.

SCUSD has focused distance learning instruction on the essential standards needed to reach grade level proficiency. Instruction aligned to these standards will build on skills students have previously mastered and prepare them for success in future content. At grades K-6, teachers have been provided with outlines in both Math and English Language Arts (ELA) that detail, for the remainder of the school year, identified essential standards, links to resources from the adopted instructional materials, and related external resources. For middle and high school, specific resources and guidance has been provided for each content area.

A hybrid instructional model has been implemented to enable all students to participate, regardless of their connectivity status. This allows for instruction to take place by conference call, phone, and printed materials in addition to online. Instruction is also on a flexible schedule to allow for students, teachers, and principals to identify the times that work best in their local context. Approximate times per subject area by grade span have been provided, along with sample schedules for families.

To facilitate implementation of online distance learning curriculum and supports, over 25,000 Chromebook devices have been distributed. Beginning with the distribution of one device per family in early April, the district has since provided a device to every student who is in need and is continuing efforts to connect with students who have yet to be reached. SCUSD has partnered with Sacramento Regional Transit and a number of other agencies to pilot a 'super hotspot' program in which city buses equipped with free internet/wifi travel to two locations each per day, providing 3.5 hours of free wireless broadband services to the community. A second partnership with Comcast and the City of Sacramento is providing eligible families with six months of free internet access. A 'Distance Learning Support for Families and Students' section of the district's website provides a range of technical support for Google classroom, Chromebook use, Student Accounts/Passwords, and Collaborative online tools. These supports are in addition to resources on Essential Standards, Curriculum Materials, and Best Practices for Distance Learning.

Through the districtwide Student Engagement Survey, teachers, schools, and the district continue to assess student learning needs. Students are asked daily what help or information they need and if they have any other comments or questions. The information received allows teachers to provide individual support and assess needs across their class(es). Staff continue to refine the definition of what it means for a student to be 'engaged' and also to monitor the various ways in which distance learning has been implemented by staff to understand the variation that exists within and across school sites. The district recognizes that providing a high-quality distance learning program is a work in progress and consistency and coherence of implementation remains an area of focus. Continued professional learning, collaboration with peers, and direct feedback from students, families, and staff will support continuous improvement.

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

The provision of school meals during the COVID-19 emergency is a critical need for SCUSD. With nearly 80% of the student population eligible for free/reduced lunch, the district serves a community in which food insecurity was already present at significant levels and has increased in the current emergency. To meet the community's needs, SCUSD has continued to provide school meals at 95-98% of the district's meal count prior to school closures. This capacity has been maintained by the Nutrition Services department with one third less staffing and by using only half of the school sites. Factors used to select school sites included the proportion of students/families eligible for free/reduced lunch and physical capacity to accommodate drive-thru/parking. Overall, selection also ensured that each region of the district has access to a meal distribution point. Families and the community have been notified through e-mail, districtwide phone calls, website postings, flyers, and social media. Program operations have been supported by a pool of over 500 volunteers. Each night, open assignments are sent out and volunteers sign-up for sites that need support.

Nutrition Services has implemented several key steps to maintain social distancing practices and limit the total amount of public exposure while continuing to provide the most meals possible to students and families in need. Currently Nutrition Services is offering 5 days of meals served Mon-Thur. Each child 18 years of age or younger receives breakfast, lunch and snack daily. Meals are delivered through a drive-thru, curbside process that ensures 6-10 feet of social distancing for staff and community members. Staff serving meals are provided several types of masks and cloth face coverings, personal hand sanitizers, and 6 foot-distancing buttons. Appropriate signage is posted at the curbside meal distribution to reinforce social distancing practices.

The district has also partnered with the Sacramento Food Bank, volunteers from local organizations, and restaurateurs to provide SCUSD families additional resources. This has included weekly distribution of supplemental food boxes with groceries for the entire family, family meal kits that can be cooked at home, and additional donated food from manufacturers. Nutrition Services has also partnered with the non-profit Food Literacy Center to support distance learning with in-home cooking assignments and aligned STEAM curriculum. These fresh produce kits are distributed at a different school each week during meal pick-up.

As May began, SCUSD served its one millionth meal since the closure of school sites with a daily meal count average of 36,000. The district is committed to maintaining meal service during the summer months and hopes to keep all 32 of the currently open sites in operation. The total number of sites the district is able to continue operating will depend on the number of available staff.

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

SCUSD examined the feasibility of providing child care for essential employees. It was determined that, with current staff providing distance learning, there was not sufficient capacity to operate a 'pop up' care program. To support families in arranging for supervision, referrals are provided to local agencies/services. These include Child Action, Inc., the YMCA's emergency child care site program, and the Essential Worker Childcare program operated by the City of Sacramento's Youth, Parks & Community Enrichment Department. Information for these programs is located on the district's website and referrals are made by staff when questions arise.

SCUSD is committed to connecting with and assessing the needs of all students. For all students, staff are assigning a daily 'Distance Learning Student Engagement Survey' as classwork. This provides a daily check of each student's status and enables staff to identify students who may need additional support beyond academics.

To connect with students that have not been reached through the survey, specific family packets are sent to homes. These packets include a letter from the Superintendent, list of community resources, and outline of ways to connect with district supports. A third tier of intervention involves coordination between the Student Support Services and the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) departments. Under their shared leadership, district teams are conducting home-visits to directly connect with students and families who have not been reached via other means. To verify accurate contact information, staff are coordinating with county agencies who interact with SCUSD families in other contexts.

Students who are identified as Foster Youth or Homeless Youth are referred to the district's resource specialists. Guidance has also been provided to all staff on appropriate steps to take should there be any indication of need to conduct a suicide risk assessment, notify Child Protective Services (CPS), or other mental health resources. Staff also have guidance for appropriate referrals when they become aware that a student or family is dealing with food insecurity, loss of stable housing, or illness.