



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press Release

Santa Ana Unified School District to start school year entirely via distance learning

Health and safety concerns have led SAUSD to shift away from in-person instruction.

(July 14, 2020) - Santa Ana Unified School District will pivot entirely to distance learning to start the upcoming school year out of concern for the safety and well-being of the entire school community.

This decision comes as the number of COVID-19 cases throughout Santa Ana, and across California and the rest of the country continues to climb at an alarming rate. Thus, a full distance learning model is the safest option for SAUSD students, parents, and staff.

"During these challenging times, the safety of our school community continues to be our top priority. While we hope at some point to have our students attend our schools alongside their classmates and teachers, now is not the time," said Superintendent Jerry Almendarez.

"Meanwhile, we are working to develop a rigorous distance learning plan that will allow students to continue their education at home."

Last week, the Board of Education unanimously approved a comprehensive plan to resume instruction for the upcoming 2020-21 school year. The plan included provisions for in-person instruction, virtual learning, and hybrid models of several options. It was designed to allow instruction to efficiently shift between models as the district continues to navigate through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"We want to proceed with extreme caution as we move forward with our efforts to offer a robust education," said SAUSD Board of Education President Dr. Rigo Rodriguez.

"Making the decision now to shift to a virtual education model gives the District more time to make sure our teachers are fully prepared, our parents are well informed, and our students have access to devices and internet needed for us to deliver the highest quality service during this time," he added.

The District is aiming to resume instruction in August. SAUSD has been working over the past few months to increase teacher professional development and to improve students' access to technology to support a more vigorous learning experience through a virtual model. The District will continue to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure the safety, academic, and social-emotional needs of students are addressed. Additionally, the District will continue to provide free grab-and-go meals at designated school sites.

The District also continues to plan for in-person instruction to resume when it is determined safe to do so by local and state health care agencies, the Board of Education, and the Santa Ana community. Whenever in-person instruction resumes, measures will be incorporated at campuses to meet safety protocols outlined at the time.

SAUSD will provide more detailed information about the plan to resume instruction virtually in the coming weeks through the district website, [SAUSD.us](https://www.sa.usd.edu), social media, emails and phone calls to parents, and other communication platforms at the district and school levels.

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