

# Superintendent Coffee Chat Q&A

October 2020

**Q. With city parks opening back up, why are school playgrounds, fields, and facilities not open with social distancing guidelines? These spaces are fundamental to our kids' ability to stay healthy and have healthy outlets.**

- A. City parks and school playgrounds have similar expectations when it comes to reopening guidance - both are expected to ensure that facilities are ready to operate and equipment is in good condition, that regular cleaning schedules are maintained, and that groups (currently defined as 10 or more people) are prohibited from gathering for extended periods.

The City of Hillsboro determined it was ready to follow these guidelines and reopen parks on September 11. They have noted that there are City staff members circulating throughout the community to ensure compliance with guidelines.

Unfortunately, HSD does not have the staff to ensure compliance for its playgrounds and playfields (see details in the [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#) guidance issued by the Oregon Department of Education, section 2g, page 40).

We absolutely understand and agree that physical activity is important for students' mental and physical health, and are trying to determine how to balance the community's need for access with our responsibility to abide by guidelines and do all we can to keep people safe and healthy.

**Q. What about high school sports and activities? When will those begin?**

- A. We are working on a plan to allow for limited outdoor workouts for high school sports and activities starting the week of November 16. Coaches and advisors will reach out to students and families with additional information over the course of the next few weeks.

**Q. What are your plans for returning to in-person schooling?**

- A. Our plan to return students to in-person schooling will follow this path, **once required health metrics are met:**
- a. **Stage 1:** All students in Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL)
  - b. **Stage 2:** All students in CDL plus some students access Limited In-Person Instruction (or LIPI, will begin for a small number of students in Q2)
  - c. **Stage 3:** Students in grades PreK-3 return to in-person schooling, grades 4-12 remain in CDL
    - i. PreK students attend in a hybrid model, two days per week
    - ii. Grades K-2 students attend daily, Monday through Friday
    - iii. Grade 3 students attend in a hybrid model, two days per week
      1. Students not wishing to attend in person may continue accessing CDL
  - d. **Stage 4:** Students in grades 4-12 return to in-person schooling in a hybrid model, two days per week (adds to Stage 3 for grades PreK-3)
    - i. Students not wishing to attend in person may continue accessing CDL

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- e. **Stage 5:** All students return to in-person schooling full-time

We anticipate it taking approximately five weeks from the first week of compliance with required health metrics to be able to bring students physically back to school. As of October 20, 2020, we have yet to meet the metrics for one week. This means that the earliest we would be able to bring even our youngest students back would be late November. We continue to monitor the health situation and plan and prepare for the eventual return of students to the classroom; and are committed to keeping students, staff, and families informed of our plans and progress along the way.

**Q. How come HSD hasn't made an announcement similar to those of Beaverton and Portland Public about not bringing students in grades 4-12 back until at least the second semester?**

- A. We believe it is our responsibility to bring students back to in-person schooling just as soon as it is safe to do so. While we understand that knowing what to plan for is helpful to students, staff, and families, we didn't want to preclude the possibility of being able to safely bring students back prior to the end of first semester. Thus far, the health metrics are not looking promising, but that could change and we want to be flexible and ready to respond accordingly.

**Q. My student is on an IEP and I am frustrated by trying to get them the support they need to be successful. What are you doing for students with special needs?**

- A. The majority of specially-designed instruction is taking place with our general education classrooms, as they are the least restrictive environment for our students.

In most schools, Wednesdays have been reserved for students needing extra support. In some schools, additional support is provided on days other than Wednesdays.

Our SLP's are using a teletherapy model and we have an assessment center at Peter Boscow they are using if they are not able to assess students remotely.

Our School Psychologists are working in an evaluation center in the Annex at Miller to evaluate students for special education services when students are not able to be assessed remotely.

Reach out to your child's case manager if you want to have a meeting or brainstorm solutions around challenges. Also, please plan to participate in the monthly SPED [Parent Partnership meetings](#) for important updates, guest speakers, and more.

**Q. What are you doing to support students' mental health needs during this challenging time?**

- A. Social-emotional lessons are delivered in Morning Meetings at the elementary school level and during advisory period at the secondary level. Also, each student has weekly

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check-ins with their teacher or another adult staff member. These check-ins provide an opportunity for staff to see how students are doing and to connect them with resources, if necessary.

Check out the Mental Health Resources pull-out section from our Spring 2020 [A Look Inside Hillsboro School District newsletter](#) for information, tips, and links to valuable resources for students at every age level.

*For September's Suicide Prevention Month, we posted the following information:*

There has never been a more important time to have honest conversations about mental health conditions and suicide, because just one conversation can change a life. It is also important to ensure that individuals, friends, and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention. There are many national and local resources to explore and share.

One national resource is The Lifeline network. The Lifeline and its partners are working to change the conversation from suicide to suicide prevention, and to actions that can promote healing, help, and hope. The Lifeline provides 24/7 free, confidential support to people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. Call 1-800-273-TALK or go to [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) for more information.

A state-level resource is YouthLine, which is a free, confidential teen-to-teen crisis and help line. Students can call 1-877-968-8491, text teen2teen or e-mail [teen2teen@LinesforLife.org](mailto:teen2teen@LinesforLife.org).

Washington County has COVID-19-related counseling available to any Washington County resident free of charge, regardless of insurance or lack of insurance. Linguistically- and culturally-specific services are available. To request an appointment, e-mail [COVIDCounseling@co.washington.or.us](mailto:COVIDCounseling@co.washington.or.us) or call Washington County Behavioral Health at 503-846-4528. For more information, visit their [Mental Health Matters](#) webpage.

At the local level, there are many District and community resources available! Visit [www.hsd.k12.or.us/suicideprevention](http://www.hsd.k12.or.us/suicideprevention) for more information, or connect with your school counselor for support and resources within your school. You can also complete the Student/Family Needs Request form to ask for mental health support; the form is available at [www.hsd.k12.or.us/coronavirus](http://www.hsd.k12.or.us/coronavirus).

In addition, several community partner organizations are offering workshops, seminars, and other helpful resources for District staff, students, and families. See the list of resources [here](#).

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The Hillsboro School District and community are here to support YOU! Please reach out to your school counselor if you have any questions about accessing the resources listed or if you or someone you know is in need of help.

HILLSBORO SCHOOLS wants YOU to be safe! ESCUELAS de HILLSBORO quieren que TU estes seguro! <b>Crisis Help available 24/7 ◊ Ayuda para crisis disponible 24/7</b>
Dial / Marque <b>911</b> For EMERGENCY, immediate and imminent harm Para EMERGENCIA, daño inmediato o inminente
Crisis Line of Washington County Línea de Crisis del Condado de Washington <b>503-291-9111</b>
Oregon Youth Line Línea Juvenil de Oregon Call <b>1-877-968-8491</b> ◊ Text <b>teen2teen</b> to <b>839863</b>
National Suicide Prevention Line Línea nacional para prevención del suicidio <b>1-800-273-8255</b>
Trevor Line for LGBTQ Youth Línea de Trevor para jóvenes LGBTQ Call: <b>1-866-488-7386</b> ◊ Text: <b>START</b> to <b>678678</b>
Sexual Assault Resource Center Centro de Recursos de Agresión Sexual <b>503-640-5311</b>

## Q. Where can I find tutoring, homework help, and other resources for my student?

- A. Talk to your child's teacher to get some advice for activities or resources that would be helpful specifically for them.

Also, Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS) has created distance learning resources to support students and help keep them engaged while they're studying remotely. Resources have been curated by WCCLS youth librarians and are organized by grade level. They include:

- Links to live tutoring in language arts, math, science, social studies and writing
- Homework help
- Writing lab – expert review of written work
- SkillSurfer – skill and test practice, video resources
- Send a question – submit questions and get written responses
- Language lab -- help learning Spanish, French, Russian, Swedish, German and more

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- g. CultureGrams – history and customs of countries around the world
- h. Mango Languages – language learning software
- i. National Geographic Kids – multimedia information about animals, geography and much more
- j. Gale in Context for elementary, middle school and high school – multimedia content, primary documents, plays, poems, topic overviews and study guides
- k. Resources for distance learners experiencing disability

Resources are free of charge for all Washington County residents. Patrons can get an e-access card online, which gives them immediate access to all WCCLS online resources.

Resource pages: [English](#), [Spanish](#)

## **Q. What steps do you have in place currently to make sure staff and students are safe in HSD buildings?**

- A. We have many protocols and procedures in place currently to ensure that any staff, students, or contractors visiting our buildings are safe:
  - a. Required daily check-in and check-out health questionnaires at each building.
  - b. Masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, and wipes at each main entrance.
  - c. Posted signage about expectations for PPE usage, personal hygiene practices, physical distancing, illness reporting, and staying home if you feel sick.
  - d. Masks required at all times while indoors, unless you are in a room with a closed door or at a cubicle with walls at least six feet high; if someone enters your workspace, you must put your mask back on immediately.
  - e. Increased outside air being brought into each building by HVAC systems
    - i. All HVAC systems have had filters changed and maintenance completed per the regular schedule
    - ii. Outside airflow has been increased significantly in all buildings
    - iii. Air circulated continuously during occupied times
    - iv. Systems are started two hours prior to building being occupied to bring in outside air, and circulated three hours after being occupied to bring in fresh air for the next day
    - v. Night purges force air outside of the building
  - f. All HSD staff and students asked to inform their supervisor/principal if they have received a positive COVID-19 diagnosis from a medical professional; staff are also asked to communicate with their supervisor if they have been notified of an exposure to COVID-19 and have a need to self-isolate. Even if staff or students have not been to a building recently, self-reporting helps the District to ensure compliance with safety protocols and contact tracing efforts.

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## **Q. Why is it ok for staff and students to wear Black Lives Matter t-shirts and buttons during online classes? Also, I heard on social media that HSD is teaching fourth-graders that BLM and Antifa are Justice Fighters, is this true?**

- A. According to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, an independent federal agency, and the Oregon School Boards Association, Black Lives Matter (BLM) is not a political statement, nor is it associated with a specific candidate or political campaign. Rather, it is a statement of social justice, which is aligned with the District's commitment to authentically affirm the identity(ies) of all students, families, and staff.

Expressing support of social causes and of people has been classified as freedom of speech, not political speech. Employees may display messaging via posters, buttons, pendants, decals, and clothing. The use of such displays with social justice messages are permitted provided they align with the following expectations:

- a. Displays must not be used to promote hateful or offensive language.
- b. Displays must not verbally attack, influence a decision, or urge someone to vote for a particular candidate, political agenda/initiative, ballot measure, etc.
- c. Displays must not condone or promote violence or criminal activity.
- d. Displays must not disrupt the learning environment.

HSD has not added BLM and Antifa to our curriculum as Justice Fighters. As part of the 4th grade social studies curriculum, students are taught about civic engagement and there are a series of lessons called Justice Fighters that teach kids about leaders who fight for justice. It includes many races and genders of leaders, including Black leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., but does not call out groups or movements like Antifa or BLM.

## **Q. Do students have access to all of the technology they need to be successful in a Comprehensive Distance Learning model?**

- A. HSD has handed out more than 9,000 Chromebooks and more than 2,000 wireless hotspots to students to help ensure they have the tools and connectivity needed to access their education. We have also worked with Comcast to provide free internet access to families for up to six months, if they meet certain income criteria.

There is a website dedicated to [technology support information for students](#), as well as a student and family helpdesk email and phone number:

[techhelp@hillsboro.incidentiq.com](mailto:techhelp@hillsboro.incidentiq.com), 503-886-8956. The student and family helpdesk is available between 7:30 a.m. and 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Friday. After 4 p.m., please leave a message with your phone number and a staff member will call you back.

## **Q. How can families access support at this time?**

- A. Families in need of support are encouraged to fill out the [Request for Resources form](#), available on our website. Staff reviews each request and works with families to connect

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them with the appropriate resources and supports. Families can also reach out to the Family and Community Engagement team to talk through their needs. Assistance in English and Spanish is available by calling 503-844-1475. Finally, there is a Community Resources document ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) available on our [coronavirus webpage](#) that provides information on a wide variety of supports and services available in the greater Hillsboro area.

### **Q. Will my elementary student have school pictures taken this year?**

- A. We are currently exploring the option of taking school pictures in the spring, if we are able to do so safely.

### **Q. I'm concerned about the rigor of AP and IB courses. Are students getting what they need for these advanced courses?**

- A. Instruction and lessons are being provided both synchronously and asynchronously for all classes, including our AP and IB courses. This instruction is designed to be rigorous and to provide students with the information and activities needed to be successful. However, it is also true that there simply is not as much live instruction happening during Comprehensive Distance Learning as there would be if students were attending school in person. For some students, this might be difficult to balance. If you or your student have concerns, please reach out to their teacher to discuss the issues and collaborate on a plan to ensure the student is being appropriately challenged.