

April 1, 2020

Sonoma County Schools Plan for Distance Learning To Continue Through the End of the School Year

To reduce the spread of COVID 19, Governor Gavin Newsom and State Superintendent Tony Thurmond advised Wednesday that school classes should continue to take place via distance learning rather than on school campuses throughout the remainder of the 2019-20 school year in California. Sonoma County schools are responding to this guidance by working hard to ensure quality learning opportunities for students via distance learning through the end of the 2019-20 school year.

These measures are necessary to help Sonoma County and California “flatten the curve” and slow the spread of COVID-19 so that emergency medical responders have as much time as possible to prepare for an influx of patients and save lives. While children generally are not severely sickened by the illness, they can still spread it to older or immuno-compromised staff or family members.

Each district will follow their academic calendars for the end of the school year under distance learning conditions. Should the governor’s order end earlier than anticipated, school districts will be flexible and consider resuming classes under the direction of the County Health Officer.

School districts have been hard at work building robust distance learning programs from the ground up. The Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) has diligently supported these efforts with virtual, county-wide trainings for educators as well as individualized support for school districts.

“We want to reassure families that school is not over,” emphasized County Superintendent Steve Herrington. “School districts are deemed an essential community service and will continue to provide distance learning, free meals for students, and many other services.”

“Since mid-March, school districts have been engaged in the monumental task of building new systems to serve all students remotely, including English learners and those with disabilities,” added Herrington. “Teachers, support staff, and administrators are working long hours to provide students access to their academic education as well as social and emotional support that is vital during these challenging times.”

As classes remain suspended, many school districts are offering "grab 'n go" meal service to any child age 18 and under. A map of grab 'n go lunch locations is available at [scoe.org/covid](https://www.scoe.org/covid).

Schools and high school seniors also received reassuring news Wednesday when the University of California announced that it will greatly ease some admission requirements for fall 2020, including suspending the letter grade requirement for A-G courses completed in winter/spring/summer 2020 for all students and suspending the standardized test requirement for students applying for fall 2021 freshman admission.

In-person graduation events and activities are suspended until the social distancing order is lifted. Check with your local district as it relates to graduation events for 2020.

SCOE recognizes the immense challenges parents and families face in educating children from home. News, information, and resources for families are available and being regularly updated at [scoe.org/covid](https://www.scoe.org/covid).