

Ontario-Montclair

School District

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SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

James Q. Hammond, Ed.D.
Superintendent

July 13, 2020

Dear OMSD Students, Families, Staff and Community,

I hope this letter finds you enjoying summer in conjunction with being healthy, safe and well. I am writing today to share important information about our current efforts to start school in the Ontario-Montclair School District (OMSD) this upcoming August. On June 19, 2020, I wrote to inform the OMSD community that we would begin working on opening schools in August under a “Hybrid Model” with three (3) learning options (Blended Learning, Online Academy and K-8 Independent Study).

[Click here to read the June 19, 2020 Communication.](#)

[Click here to view the Learning Opportunities Flyer.](#)

In each of my communications since March 13, 2020, including the letter sent on June 19, 2020, I mentioned that OMSD’s commitment to the health and safety of students and staff would guide the decisions I make as a Superintendent as we all deal with the COVID-19 global pandemic. As a result, I have now made the decision that all OMSD students and staff will begin the 2020-2021 school year under an online learning model.

The OMSD online learning model maintains the same high-quality instruction from teachers using the District's adopted curriculum, state content standards, and interventions for students needing additional help. Parent and teacher partnership, communication and commitment is essential in this model. Students in this model will learn remotely from home and be connected via a computer or District-issued Chromebook for daily instruction and feedback.

The primary reason for my decision is based on rising rates of COVID-19 in the cities of Ontario and Montclair (in addition to increased cases of COVID-19 in the communities that surround OMSD). Additionally, gatherings of large sizes are still not recommended in the State of California or the County of San Bernardino. Based on this information and the guidance we have received, we have determined it is not safe, prudent, or wise to gather large groups of OMSD students and staff in a sustained fashion.

My decision was not made in isolation. With support from the San Bernardino County Public Health Department, in consultation with the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, with review of the guidelines from the California Department of Education and adherence to Senate Bill 98, it is my belief that starting the school year under our online learning model will mitigate student and staff exposure to COVID-19. This will also allow time for the medical community in our country, state and county to provide us the resources and capacity to suppress, contain and eventually eradicate the COVID-19 virus.

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The online program that will be offered to students for the start of the 2020-2021 school year will differ from the distance learning program offered at the end of last school year. This online program will align with Senate Bill (SB) 98, which clearly articulates expectations for remote/online learning. These expectations include:

- Access for pupils connectivity and devices to participate in learning and to complete assignments;
- Daily live interaction with certificated employees and peers for purposes of instruction, progress monitoring and maintaining school connectedness;
- Content aligned to grade level standards at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction;
- Supports to address the needs of pupils who are not performing at grade level, or need support in other areas;
- Implementation of appropriate accommodations and specialized instruction necessary for students with exceptional needs to access services listed in their individualized education program in a remote/online learning environment; and
- Designated and integrated English language development for English Learners.

OMSD is committed to collaborating with all stakeholders in order to meet these high expectations in support of student learning and their well-being.

Students and staff will be welcomed back to OMSD schools for the 2020-2021 school year under the following timeline:

July 13, 2020	OMSD administrators will report to work during this week to begin planning and preparing for the new school year.
August 3, 2020	OMSD teachers will report to their respective school sites and/or departments.
August 7, 2020	All OMSD students will begin the school year remotely from home under the OMSD online learning model with daily live interaction with certificated employees and peers. Parents and students should anticipate a small group orientation session, scheduled by your student's school, to support learning remotely from home.

Year-round classified support staff will continue to receive direction on their work calendar and hours from their supervisors. Classified support staff who work less than a year-round calendar, will receive notification and direction from their respective supervisors prior to August 7, 2020.

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Returning to school under a Blended Learning or Traditional Learning model will happen when conditions allow. Although I cannot be definitive on when that will be, my office and team of district office administrators will assist me in the daily monitoring of trends related to COVID-19 (number of cases, impact on hospitals, lagging statistics related to confirmed cases and access to medical interventions) and work closely with county and state officials on what criteria we should consider when re-opening our schools to students and families. When a decision is made to return to school under a Blended Learning or Traditional Learning model, ample time will be provided so that students, staff and families will be prepared for the transition. To remain regularly updated on communications from my office on return to school plans, please bookmark or check in regularly on the OMSD website at www.omsd.net.

Now that a decision to start the 2020-2021 school year under our online learning model has been made, much work needs to be accomplished before staff reports to work and students begin learning on August 7, 2020. Therefore, I want all students, staff and families to be aware of our pending efforts over the next four (4) weeks. This includes:

1. Even though all OMSD students will begin August 7, 2020 under our online learning model, OMSD parents and families still need to communicate their preference between Blended Learning, Online Academy or Independent Study for their child. This will help site staff plan accordingly in anticipation that sometime during the school year Blended Learning may be offered. These preferences are being collected via OMSD's [Learning Option Selection Form](#). If families have not already designated their preference, please utilize the link above or visit the District website to make a selection. If you have questions, you may contact your school's administrator the week of July 20, 2020.
2. School sites will communicate to all students and families a Student/Parent Chromebook and Online Learning Orientation plan by the end of July.
3. Online learning schedules, upcoming IEP's, assessments, and services will be communicated from school sites prior to August 7, 2020.
4. OMSD plans to produce a Return to School 2020 document by the end of July that further articulates the guidelines and efforts that promote social distancing, best practices and other safety interventions as we work and learn in midst of a global pandemic.
5. Create training opportunities for certificated, classified and administrative staff prior to the start of school that help all of us prepare to return to school under our online learning model.

Last March, we knew that closing school sites and district buildings in OMSD was essential to flattening the curve of COVID-19 infection across the Inland Empire. It was profoundly challenging, but all of you handled it with unbelievable savvy, compassion, grace and effort.

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Now, almost five (5) months later, our commitment to health and safety will continue to drive us into the new school year.

We have been through so much together, and as we look ahead to August, we see the big picture: the continuing rise in COVID-19 cases across Southern California; guidance from county, state, and federal health authorities' fluidly changing; and ongoing knowledge that the trajectory of the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve. Every teacher, classified support staff and administrator in OMSD wishes to have all of our students back in school learning and experiencing social development. It is my hope that sometime during the upcoming school year conditions in California will allow Governor Newsom to lift our current "Stay at Home Order" and we can return to our Traditional Learning model where all OMSD students will be back in our schools with friends, classified support staff, teachers and administrators.

As we begin the 2020-2021 school year in an unprecedented way, please remember our plans in OMSD must be nimble and adaptable so we can adjust and update our efforts as needed, as the public health landscape continues to evolve. My office remains committed to keeping all of you updated on events and conditions that will drive my future decisions and recommendations to the OMSD Board of Trustees. Once again, I ask that you visit our District website at www.omsd.net for the latest updates and information.

Together, we will address the concerns related to COVID-19 while maintaining a concerted focus on the health and well-being of our students and staff, while ensuring OMSD students continue to receive a world-class education.

Respectfully,
James Q. Hammond, Ed.D.
Superintendent