

Good afternoon Paramount community,

With the start of the school year rapidly approaching, and the annual Board meeting concluded, I wanted to write each of you to begin outlining the reopening plan for the 2020-2021 school year. Below are upcoming dates relevant to staff and families and what we hope are answers to some of the more frequently asked questions received up to this point. These details and others will be included in the Return to School plan which will be released next week. Please understand that these details could change depending on decisions made at the local, state and federal levels of government.

Additionally, we understand as you read the school modifications below that these changes were made with student and staff safety and health in mind. Those two elements, under the guidance of local, state, and federal health officials, are what will guide us in our decision making during this pandemic

Upcoming Dates of Importance:

1. July 30th, 2020: MEET THE TEACHER (4PM)
 - a. This year's Meet the Teacher will be delivered virtually for all grade levels. Your Meet the Teacher video can be found by clicking [here](#) on July 30th at 4pm.
 - b. Kindergarten families and new families to Paramount Academy will be able to Meet your Teacher and tour the school in person by appointment. Please click [here](#) if you are welcoming a Kindergarten student or a new student to Paramount to schedule an in-person appointment if you would like one.
2. August 3rd, 2020: First Day of School
 - a. School will begin online for all students per Governor Ducey's executive order.
 - b. Students will be using Microsoft Teams to enter into the distance learning platform for Paramount Academy. This was the platform used during the 4th quarter of the 2019-2020 school year.
 - c. The first few weeks of school will be focusing on social and emotional learning, review of the previous school year, and benchmark testing.
 - d. School will be delivered via distance learning until the Governor allows students to return to school. At this time, the date given by the Governor is August 17th, but as of today, the Governor and Superintendent of Schools have stated that new benchmarks to determine the return of students to school campuses will come around August 7th.

Expected Changes to on-campus learning due to COVID-19:

1. **Student arrival/dismissal:** Parents/guardians are being asked to screen their child's temperature prior to arriving to school. Student temperatures will be checked upon arrival to ensure maximum health safety. This may increase the drop-off time in the morning, so please plan accordingly. Any student with a temperature above a 99.9 will not be allowed on campus. Students will go directly to their homeroom upon arrival to Paramount Academy. Student arrival and dismissal times may have to be staggered to comply with local, state, and federal regulations. If these times change outside of the typical 8am-2:45pm (K,1,2) or 8am-3pm (3rd-8th) schedule we will let you know.

2. **Facial masks/coverings:** As stated by the most up-to-date requirements by Maricopa County Health Services ([click here](#)), facial masks will be mandatory while on campus. All staff will wear facial masks or coverings throughout the day.
 - a. **Exceptions (as outlined by [Maricopa County regulations](#))**
 - i. The individual has a medical or behavioral condition or disability and cannot wear a face covering (including, but not limited to, any person who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious or incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to put on or remove the face covering without assistance)
 - ii. When actively eating or drinking
 - iii. When strenuously exercising or swimming
 - iv. When seeking to communicate with someone with hearing loss in a way that requires the mouth to be visible
 - b. Any student who refuses to comply with school safety protocols will be assigned to Paramount's distance learning program pursuant to A.R.S. 15-841(F)
3. **Classroom setup:** Where physical distancing of 6 feet is not possible, classrooms will have student desks in a row facing in the same direction. In each classroom, every student will be assigned to his or her own specific desk.
4. **Hand-washing/sanitation:** Paramount Academy students will take breaks every 2 hours to wash their hands. We are lucky that we have sinks in every classroom, so this will take minimal time away from classroom instruction.
5. **Water Fountains:** Drinking fountains will be inactive. Please have your child bring a water bottle. These will be able to be refilled in the classroom. We will have bottled water available for 25 cents per bottle in each classroom for your child's convenience.
6. **Supply Lists:** Grade Level Supply Lists have been updated and can be seen by clicking [here](#). Students will need to bring their own materials, keeping them in a sealed bag (Ziploc bag, for example) and materials can no longer be shared between students.
7. **Specials:** Students will remain grouped by homeroom and will not rotate to another classroom for Specials. Specials teachers will come to the students' homerooms instead.
8. **4th-8th Grade:** Students in grades K-8 will remain in their homeroom and will not rotate to other classrooms throughout the day. Grade-level materials will stay in the homerooms and subject-area teachers will rotate to the students instead. 4th-8th grade teachers will use a rolling cart to bring their teacher manuals, materials, and technology equipment to the students.
9. **Multi-grade Gatherings:** Assemblies, after-school clubs, and sports are hereby postponed through December 31st, 2020
10. **Tutoring:** Tutoring will still be available after school since those sessions are exclusively taught by the child's homeroom teacher.
11. **Playground Equipment:** Students will not be allowed to play on the playground equipment due to the risk of cross-contamination of grade-levels. Students will have recess time on our two fields on campus. PE will be held outside when weather permits and will be focused on individual goal-driven exercises. Students are also asked to keep their personal play equipment at home.
12. **Ventilation:** Paramount Academy is equipped with commercial air conditioning units that utilizes outside air to replenish classroom air, keeping each room well ventilated.

13. **Clothing:** Students are encouraged to bring a change of clothes in a sealed bag to keep in their backpack. Paramount Academy will no longer be able to offer replacement clothing items.

Ever since the Governor initially closed schools back in March, many parents and teachers have asked questions about this upcoming school year. We hope to answer some of these below:

1. School starts on August 3rd online. Does my child have to start August 3rd or can we wait until school is opened?
 - a. With the school year beginning on August 3rd and the Governor approving distance learning for Arizona schools, attendance will begin August 3rd and any students not participating and logging attendance will be counted absent.
2. Last year, your teachers were available from 9am-1pm. What are the school hours this year?
 - a. Teacher availability will mirror a typical school day from 8am-2:45pm (K,1,2) or 8am-3pm (3rd-8th).
 - b. A bell schedule will be created similar to in-person schooling to aid in building a structured school day for those who continue distance learning once school re-opens.
3. What if I am not ready to send my child to school when the Governor reopens schools?
 - a. Paramount Academy will have the option of distance learning throughout the school year for families who prefer to learn virtually or students who may be self-quarantined due to COVID-19 until mandated attendance is issued by the state.
4. Once students are allowed back on campus, will Paramount Academy still offer early morning care and after-school extended education programs?
 - a. Currently, we will continue to offer both before-school and after-school programs with students assigned to classroom-specified tables to mimic classroom-level separation that will be taking place the rest of the school day
 - b. Early education (7am-7:30am) and Extended education (typically 3:15pm-6pm) will only be offered as a 5-day option so that we are able to report that as a specific cohort to the local, state, and federal health officials.
 - c. Students will still be able to participate in recess during extended education with increased distancing policies in place
5. What is your response if there is a case of COVID-19 reported at Paramount Academy?
 - a. The district will follow CDC protocols regarding reported cases and take specific guidance from the Maricopa County Department of Public Health. Please know that we are monitoring the latest news from local, state, and federal health officials on a daily basis.
 - b. With current Federal Privacy laws in place, the reasons for any specific student or staff member absence will not be reported to the public
6. What is your procedure for screening students and staff for possible COVID-19 related symptoms?
 - a. We ask that each student be pre-screened at home before coming to school to ensure students do not have any of the possible symptoms of COVID-19. Those symptoms can be found [here](#).

- b. We have a flow chart for Paramount staff to ensure any student experiencing any of the symptoms is addressed quickly and safely in an area isolated from the rest of the student population.

Please know we appreciate your partnership in making sure our students, staff, and families are as safe and healthy as possible. Please keep your children home if they are showing any of the symptoms found [here](#). Please work with your children on wearing masks one hour a day for a week, then two hours a day. This will help in the transition to school where we will depend on that routine to make sure students are keeping their facial coverings on in class.

We look forward to hearing feedback from you to make sure we have the easiest transition back to school for what will be a very different 2020-2021 school year. We know you have a tough choice to make; we are confident that together we can build the best experience for the students and community of Paramount Academy.

Sincerely,

Paramount Academy Administration and Board of Directors