

# Rhino Roar



*News for the Washington community*

Published weekly

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Links to [calendar](#) and past [newsletters](#) on [PTA website](#)

The Fall [Learning Plan](#) is here! Please read through it and plan to attend one of the upcoming [Town Hall meetings](#) to further understand it. Email Principal Hazen with questions.

Class assignments will be sent via email on August 12 at noon. We'll also be holding optional grade level orientations online before the beginning of school. They will be recorded if you are unable to attend. Please watch your email for more information.

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE: I hope everyone has been able to find some enjoyment and connection during this strange "summer break." I want to extend a special Rhino welcome to all of the new families joining our community.

I know that for almost everyone reading this, and for many, many others

throughout our city, state, country, and world, this is not the school opening anyone was hoping for. Although this remains an extraordinarily challenging time, I believe there is tremendous possibility within that challenge — the possibility to come together as a community, to disrupt inequities, and to lay the foundation for a stronger, more just world.

I anticipate that this will be a year of changes, adjustments, and recalibrations as we navigate the reality of COVID-19. Whatever Washington looks like and wherever the learning takes place, our decisions will be guided by our commitment to the following principles:

EQUITY (differentiation — one size does not fit all)

RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOL & FAMILY

The 2020-21 school year officially begins on **Monday, August 17**, and I know many of you are hungry for specifics on what school will look and feel like, and how it will differ from distance learning in the spring. Please know that all plans depend on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BUSD and our teachers' union, BFT, and the classified union BCCE; these MOUs are still being negotiated. Although there are still a lot of unknowns, the Superintendent's plan is finalized.

### **WHAT WILL DISTANCE LEARNING LOOK LIKE AT WASHINGTON 2020-21?**

Online learning this fall will have a very different feel than spring did. Washington staff and educators throughout BUSD have been working all summer to build on what we learned from last Spring's abrupt move to the online world. We spent a lot of time analyzing the surveys you completed around your experience with online instruction and, although none of us feel that online instruction is nearly as effective as face to face, we are confident that we will be able to implement an effective and meaningful educational program for all of our students throughout 2020-21.

The primary Washington school structure of 18 classes in grades K-5 will remain the same. Students will be assigned to balanced, diverse classes with one main teacher for 20 - 25 students. The learning plan linked at the top of this newsletter has examples of weekly schedules.

I want to share some general ways in which distance learning will be different from what you experienced last spring.

**Daily Video Meetings:** Per state law AB-77, all students will meet with school staff and peers daily. Teachers will be required to take daily attendance of Zoom meetings, and we will follow up with families whose children miss classes to see how we can support them. To read the sections of AB-77 relevant to K-12 education, read below. We acknowledge that Zoom meetings can be challenging for some students, and also want to assure the community that we will support families with limited access to technology.

**Combination of Whole Group and Small Group Zoom Meetings:** It is clear to teachers and parents that kids learn best — and video meet-ups work best — when there are fewer people in a group. At the same time, it is also important for the whole class to be together to develop community. That's why both types of meetings/sessions will be held. At Washington, when we say “small groups,” we are referring to a heterogenous, mixed ability grouping. Your child’s teacher will assign them to group A or group B after the Orientation period.

**Combination of Synchronous and Asynchronous Instruction:** Many lessons will be available asynchronously, through pre-recorded videos, slide shows and other formats. Students may be asked to watch a lesson and/or prepare before meetings with the teacher. This will allow teachers to use the face-to-face time to check for understanding, push to go deeper, synthesize information, and ensure learning.

**Required Assignments:** Students will be required to complete assignments, and teachers will provide feedback. It will be a combination of digital and on-paper work, with less time on computers for our younger kids than their older

counterparts.

**Attendance:** Your child will be required to attend the daily whole class meeting in the morning, small group instruction and turn in required assignments in order to be counted as present.

**Assessing Student Learning:** At the beginning of the year and multiple times throughout, all students will take benchmark assessments so teachers can see how kids are doing in reading and math and share that information with families. The younger students will take these assessments in small groups on Zoom, and older students will be able to complete them online independently. Teachers will provide frequent feedback to both students and families. Report cards will include standards-based grades.

**Streamlining & Consistency:** Teachers will be collaborating across each grade to ensure that all students receive access to the same material. We will have clear content expectations by grade level, adjusted for a distance learning context, and consistent with Common Core State Standards. Teachers will communicate to families the learning goals on a regular basis.

**The First 2 Weeks:** The plan throughout BUSD is for the first two weeks to be orientations for students and parents, as well as getting to know each child and family individually. Teachers will also spend time attending Professional Development sessions geared towards Distance Learning.

**Schedule:** By the third week of school, all of Washington will be operating on a clear, predictable daily schedule that is consistent throughout each grade level. Once we have an agreement between BUSD and BFT & BCCE, I will be able to share more details.

**Enrichments:** Students will receive classes with our talented music, library, physical education, and science staff.

**Communication:** We recognize that strong communication is paramount in this time. In addition to all of the regular written correspondence, we will be building in time for more virtual face-to-faces. Teachers will have regular slots for parents

to drop in and hear what is going on and what the weekly learning expectations are. I will be hosting weekly “coffee chats” for parents. All classroom teachers will be meeting with all families individually (most likely virtually, but in person if allowable) during the first few weeks of school. Additionally, case managers will be reaching out to families of students with IEPs or 504s during this time. Also, we will be scheduling special sessions for new-to-Washington families to meet key Washington staff.

The mental health issues related to our lockdown and the pandemic are especially hard for people with depression. The wonderful charity MIND has a 24 hour helpline: 800-123-3393

The school board passed Resolution No. 20-064 on June 10 that reads, in part: “*the Berkeley Unified School Board hereby commits to a renaming process for Washington Elementary School.*” We’ll begin this process in January of 2021 with a series of informational virtual meetings, so stay tuned!

Excerpt from AB-77: 43503. (a) (1) For the 2020–21 school year, a local educational agency that offers distance learning shall comply with the requirements of subdivision (b).

(2) Distance learning may be offered under either of the following circumstances:

(A) On a local educational agency or schoolwide level as a result of an order or guidance from a state public health officer or a local public health officer.

(B) For pupils who are medically fragile or would be put at risk by in-person instruction, or who are self-quarantining because of exposure to COVID-19.

(b) Distance learning shall include all of the following:

(1) Confirmation or provision of access for all pupils to connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work.

(2) Content aligned to grade level standards that is provided at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction.

(3) Academic and other supports designed to address the needs of pupils who are not

performing at grade level, or need support in other areas, such as English learners, pupils with exceptional needs, pupils in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and pupils requiring mental health supports.

(4) Special education, related services, and any other services required by a pupil's individualized education program pursuant to Section 56341, including the requirements of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (9) of subdivision (a) of Section 56345, with accommodations necessary to ensure that individualized education program can be executed in a distance learning environment.

(5) Designated and integrated instruction in English language development pursuant to Section 11300 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations for English learners, including assessment of English language proficiency, support to access curriculum, the ability to reclassify as fully English proficient, and, as applicable, support for dual language learning.

(6) Daily live interaction with certificated employees and peers for purposes of instruction, progress monitoring, and maintaining school connectedness. This interaction may take the form of internet or telephonic communication, or by other means permissible under public health orders. If daily live interaction is not feasible as part of regular instruction, the governing board or body of the local educational agency shall develop, with parent and stakeholder input, an alternative plan for frequent live interaction that provides a comparable level of service and school connectedness.

(c) Pursuant to Sections 49550 and 47613.5, school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools shall provide nutritionally adequate meals for pupils who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals, whether engaged in in-person instruction or distance learning, contingent upon the department receiving an approved waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture, for each day of the scheduled school year.

43504. (a) The compulsory education requirements described in Section 48200 continue to apply for the 2020–21 school year.

(b) A local educational agency shall offer in-person instruction to the greatest extent

possible.

(c) For the 2020–21 school year, for purposes of the requirement on school districts to offer 180 instructional days per school year pursuant to Section 46208 and the requirement on charter schools to offer 175 instructional days per school year pursuant to Section 11960 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, an instructional day is a day in which all pupils are scheduled for the length of the day established by the governing board or body of the local educational agency in a classroom under the immediate supervision of a certificated employee or in distance learning that meets the minimum requirements described in this part.

(d) (1) Each local educational agency shall document daily participation for each pupil on each school day, in whole or in part, for which distance learning is provided. A pupil who does not participate in distance learning on a school day shall be documented as absent for that school day.

(2) For purposes of this section, daily participation may include, but is not limited to, evidence of participation in online activities, completion of regular assignments, completion of assessments, and contacts between employees of the local educational agency and pupils or parents or guardians.

(e) Each local educational agency shall ensure that a weekly engagement record is completed for each pupil documenting synchronous or asynchronous instruction for each whole or partial day of distance learning, verifying daily participation, and tracking assignments.

(f) (1) A pupil who does not participate daily in either in-person instruction pursuant to subdivision (b) or distance learning pursuant to subdivision (d) shall be deemed absent by the local educational agency. A local educational agency shall use documentation of the absence for purposes of reporting its chronic absenteeism rates in its local control and accountability plan.

(2) Each local educational agency shall develop written procedures for tiered reengagement

strategies for all pupils who are absent from distance learning for more than three school days or 60 percent of the instructional days in a school week. These procedures shall include, but are not limited to, verification of current contact information for each enrolled pupil, daily notification to parents or guardians of absences, a plan for outreach from the school to determine pupil needs including connection with health and social services as necessary and, when feasible, transitioning the pupil to full-time in-person instruction.

(g) Each school shall regularly communicate with parents and guardians regarding a pupil's academic progress.

(h) The Controller shall include instructions necessary to enforce the requirements of this part in the 2020–21 audit guide required by Section 14502.1.

(i) (1) For a school district or charter school that offers fewer than the instructional days required in subdivision (c), the Superintendent shall withhold from the local educational agency's local control funding formula grant apportionment for the prior year average daily attendance of each affected grade level, the sum of .0056 multiplied by that apportionment for each day less than what was required pursuant to this section.

(2) For a local educational agency that does not meet the requirements in subdivision (d), (e), or (f), the Superintendent shall withhold from the local educational agency's local control funding formula grant apportionment the percentage of days out of compliance multiplied by the derived value of average daily attendance, all multiplied by the average daily attendance of each affected grade level. For purposes of this paragraph, the percentage of days out of compliance is equivalent to the number of days out of compliance divided by the total number of instructional days required to be offered.

(3) A local educational agency that provides distance learning shall not be penalized for instruction provided before September 1, 2020, that fails to meet the requirements of this section.

Questions or concerns? Please email Principal Katia Hazen at

[katiahazen@berkeley.net](mailto:katiahazen@berkeley.net)



