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Superintendent: Matt Doyle, Ed.D.

Board Members: Rich Alderson, Martha Alvarado, Debbie Morton, Rosemary Smithfield and Cipriano Vargas

## Community Health Alert - Vista Unified School Closure Extended

March 27, 2020

Esteemed Parents, Students, Staff, and Community Members,

This is the seventh **Community Health Alert** regarding information about the coronavirus (COVID-19) and the proactive steps the Vista Unified staff is taking to ensure the safety of all students and adults.

The Vista Unified School Board approved an extension to school closures in a special board meeting held on Thursday, March 26, 2020. Specifically, the Board approved the following language **“Extend school closure for all Vista Unified schools until further notice with reopening pending positive health and safety reports from the state and county authorities.”**

This board action was based on an analysis of significant data related to the current status of the Covid-19 health pandemic globally, nationally and regionally. Click [HERE](#) to access the presentation given to the school board outlining the key data related to the Covid 19 pandemic. This presentation will also be posted to the [Health and Safety](#) webpage. The school board and our entire Vista Unified team place the health and safety of our students and staff as the highest priority for our district.

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### Vista Virtual School

As a friendly reminder, next week is Spring Break, starting on March 30 and ending on April 3, 2020.



During this week, all school related activities will be closed. Teachers and staff will not be working, and students will not be required to complete school work during this week. To support families in need during this time, we have planned to continue student nutrition distribution at the Boys and Girls Club located at 410 West California Avenue, Vista 92083. Please note that the student nutrition bags will be distributed from 11:00 am- 12:00 pm on Monday, March 30, 2020 only and will contain five day's worth of food. These bags will be heavy, so families should consider some method for transporting these. Please observe social distancing measures as you receive this nutrition support. Details about the spring break food distribution can be found [here](#).

In anticipation of this extended school closure, the Vista Unified team of teachers and administrators has developed the Vista Virtual School System to provide a continuation of learning and support services during this time. It is important to note that while we believe that the Vista Virtual School System is high quality, it is not intended to replace the normal learning environment.

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Due to the limitations of a virtual environment, lessons and interactions with teachers will be different. However, each student will have the opportunity to engage in high quality learning experiences, and at the same time, our teachers will be developing their skills as virtual educators. Our virtual school will become more interactive and connected as we build our capacity to operate in a distance learning environment together. **We will launch the Vista Virtual School System on April 6, 2020.**

The Vista Virtual School is our newest system of support intended to provide remote access to a host of resources and learning experiences for all students. We have created a website to serve as the hub for our virtual learning system. **We will make the website live on Monday, April 6, 2020.**

Thank you all for your patience as we distributed paper instructional packets for students to use in the interim period of this school closure. While the packets were available online, the demand for the paper packets was much larger than we had originally anticipated. Indeed, we distributed over 9,000 instructional packets. We will not be distributing paper-based instructional packets during the Vista Virtual School implementation. In order for all students to engage in a high quality learning experience and to access the lessons, resources, and supports, it is important for students and parents to make the adjustment to working in the virtual environment. Additionally, this virtual experience will give all students a great jumpstart in learning how to navigate in a virtual environment that they will soon encounter as they prepare for their future careers.

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## Technology Support

The staff at every school in the district is working diligently to prepare a technology distribution plan so that any student who does not have access to a computer at home can check-out a device. If you have more than one child in Vista schools, each student may check out a device. In order to protect the health of students, parents, and staff, **we will be opening every school in the district on April 6, 2020 to distribute technology to students.** Middle and high schools may take more than one day. Parents will receive a notification from their principal with details about the distribution for their child's school. Students can only check out a device from their specific school site. We know that this may be inconvenient for families who have children at more than one school; however, the process is necessary to protect the integrity of our computer inventory system. Each school will have strict social distancing measures in place. We would like to request that parents use the drive-through option for device pick-up.

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## Internet Access

We would like to request that as many families as possible use the internet service that they have already installed in their residence. For those families that will use a Vista Unified device, there will be access to video tutorials to learn how to set-up the device once checked out. We have a team of experts who will be working with families that do not have access to the internet on an as needed basis.

IT staff will be available to provide technical support for families Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m by phone at (760) 726-2170, extension 92500 or by email at [servicedesk@vistausd.org](mailto:servicedesk@vistausd.org).

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Cox Communications pledges for the next 60 days to: “not terminate service to any residential customer because of an inability to pay their bills due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic; waive any late fees that any residential customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and open Cox WiFi hotspots to help keep the public connected in this time of need.” Please visit [www.cox.com/hotspots](http://www.cox.com/hotspots) for more information on Cox WiFi Hotspots.

The Cox Connect2Compete program is available to families who:

- have at least one child who attends a Vista Unified School,
- participate in one of these government subsidy programs: The National School Lunch Program, SNAP, TANF or Public Housing
- have not had Cox internet services in the home within the last 90 days.

If your household meets these criteria, you may qualify for discounted home internet service from Cox for just \$9.95 per month. For participating families, there are no deposits or annual contracts, and installation and in-home wifi is included at no additional charge. Find out if you qualify by visiting [www.cox.com/c2c](http://www.cox.com/c2c), or call 1-855-222-3252. Vista Unified is currently working on a possible plan to cover the cost of this service for families who qualify for the free lunch program once district wireless hotspots are exhausted.

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## Census Information

### ***A message from Martha Alvarado, School Board Member***

As you probably know, the US Census has commenced. As of March 12th, households in our community and across the nation should have received an invitation via the US Postal Service with instructions on how to complete the 2020 Census. Individuals will be able to self-respond for their residence in one of three ways: online, by phone, or by mail. There will be 10 questions for the Head of Household to fill out and 8 questions for other household members to answer. Rest assured, your answers to the response questions will remain anonymous. Your answers are only used to generate statistical data.

I want to stress that the Census 2020 will continue via the aforementioned ways to self-respond, despite the COVID-19 crisis. Although the field response has been suspended, self-response is now open through August 14th. There are \$800 billion dollars in federal funds at stake, so it is imperative for our community to participate and spread the word to our relatives, neighbors, and friends. Together, we will ensure that we are all counted!

If you need any help with self-responding, please reach out to the parent liaison at your site. Their contact information can be found [here](#). You can also contact me via email at [marthaalvarado@vistausd.org](mailto:marthaalvarado@vistausd.org). For more information, go to: <https://my2020census.gov/> or <https://hagasecontar.org/>.

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The Vista Unified School District is committed to providing a robust set of support to students and families during this challenging health emergency. Please know that we will continue to expand our support systems based on feedback from the community.

We thank you for your continued cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Matt Doyle  
Superintendent of Schools  
Vista Unified School District

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