



Hart-Ransom Union School District

3920 Shoemaker Avenue
Modesto, California 95358
Phone: (209) 523-9996 • Fax: (209) 523-9997

Trustees
Shawn Brunk
Rich Fultz
Ashley Heinrich
Seth Renicker
Sandy Riggins

Jerrianna Boer
Principal
Elementary School

Matthew Shipley
Superintendent

Sean Greene
Principal
Charter School

SUPERINTENDENT LETTER TO PARENTS REGARDING SCHOOL CLOSURE THROUGH THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

April 1, 2020 (*Updated from letters dated 3/19/2020 and 3/26/2020*)

Dear Hart-Ransom Elementary School parents,

This updated letter is being provided to you as a result of guidance and directives that we have now received from State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond and Governor Gavin Newsom to keep schools closed through the end of the current school year.

As our school closure continues due to the developing COVID-19 (coronavirus) situation, I want to let you know that we truly appreciate the understanding, cooperation, and support that so many of you have demonstrated to our school and to the Hart-Ransom district as a whole during this time of constant change and uncertainty. As we all know, Hart-Ransom is a very special place because of the people who work here and the people who live in our community and entrust their children to our school. None of us truly knows what the future is going to look like, but all of us can take comfort in knowing that we are here for each other and that our community will stick together during these challenging times. Together we are stronger, and together we will get through this.

In this letter, I will share information with you regarding: school closure timeline, communicating with the schools and the district office, learning expectations and supports for students, technology access, and meals for students. New information about the state of public health in Stanislaus County comes out every day, and we are continually monitoring the facts with a view toward the ways in which our school district and the people that we serve will be affected. As you know, we have strategies and plans in place, but our plans are changing as the situation progresses. We will be sure to update you when new decisions are made that will affect our schools, our staff, and our students.

School Closure Timeline: Schools Now Closed Through the End of the Current School Year

The closure of our schools has now been extended through the end of the school year. This decision has been made in consultation with guidance and directives that we have now received from State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond and Governor Gavin Newsom. Please check the school website and/or district website frequently for any further updates about the school closure and other relevant topics.

Communicating With the Schools and the District Office

During the period of school closure, we will do our best to be accessible to you if you need to contact us. To the greatest extent possible, please avoid coming to the school office or district office in person, and seek to conduct your business with us via telephone or email in order to respect the safety of others and to help limit the potential for community transmission of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) disease. If your business truly requires you to be physically present at one of our offices, please help protect our employees by maintaining appropriate social distancing (at least six feet away), ensuring that your hands have been washed using soap and water or hand sanitizer, and directing any coughs or sneezes into a tissue or into a bent elbow. Please note that office doors will be closed and locked, even if there are staff members working inside. If you need to drop something off or pick something up at the school office or the district office, please contact the office staff by telephone ahead of time to make arrangements.

Contact Information for HRES

- School office:
 - (209) 523-9979

- Mrs. Boer, Principal
 - (209) 232-4476
 - jboer@hartransom.org
- Mr. Martins, Assistant Principal
 - (209) 214-7251
 - bmartins@hartransom.org
- Kelly Orvick, Technology Teacher
 - (209) 322-9775
 - korvick@hartransom.org
 - (Parents may contact Ms. Orvick for help with technology resources.)

Contact Information for HRUSD

- District office:
 - (209) 523-9996
- Mr. Shipley, Superintendent
 - mshipley@hartransom.org
- Mrs. Silva, Chief Business Officer
 - dsilva@hartransom.org

Learning Expectations and Supports for Students

During the period of school closure, our teachers are going to do their best to continue to support our students' ongoing learning engagement, intellectual stimulation, and academic health. They will be using a variety of methods to accomplish this, including supplemental online resources, printed resources, emails, and phone calls. This will look different from one teacher to the next, but every teacher will do their best to keep their students engaged in learning even though they cannot be physically present with their students during this time. Students will not earn formal grades for their learning during this time, but this is an excellent opportunity for students to focus on specific academic areas in which they need to improve. Please feel free to reach out to your child's teacher via email or by other appropriate methods that they have provided to discuss your child's progress and learning needs during this time.

As parents, this is also an excellent opportunity for you to engage directly with your children in the learning process in ways that you might not normally be able to accomplish. We encourage you to read with or to your children frequently and talk with them about what you are reading together. We also encourage you to spend time with your children learning about areas of interest, which may include scientific inquiry, practical math applications, history, and current events. In particular, the coronavirus itself can be an interesting study on many levels, and the current presidential election cycle provides an exceptional opportunity for students and parents to learn together about civics and politics. This may also be a great time for parents and their children to learn a new skill set or hobby together. Ms. Orvick has also set up a webpage with distance learning resources that parents can access.

(<https://sites.google.com/hartransom.org/hre-extended-learning/home>) The possibilities are endless, and I hope that each of you is able to take hold of this unique opportunity to learn together with your child(ren) and to deepen your relationships together.

Technology Access

There are so many supplemental learning resources available online that it is very helpful if your children can be given access to an internet-connected device for learning during this time. This could be a computer, a tablet, a smartphone, an internet-connected television, or other internet-connected device. Many of our teachers will be posting and linking supplemental learning resources on their teacher webpages or through other online venues. If you have not already, you may want to consider implementing a filtering service or software on your home WiFi network and/or internet-connected device(s) in order to protect your child(ren) from inappropriate web content. For those who do not have WiFi access at home, you may want to visit Ms. Orvick's distance learning resources webpage for information about low-cost or no-cost internet access at home.

While our 7th and 8th grade students are able to take their school-issued Chromebooks home, some parents of students in grade six and below have asked whether their children could be allowed to take a school-issued Chromebook home as well. At this time, we are not logistically set up for students in grades two through six to be able to take home school-issued Chromebooks, but we are currently exploring whether or not we could make that happen during the period of school closure. We will let you know if we gain the ability to check out school-issued Chromebooks to students in grades two through six. In the meantime, please note that everything a student would be able to access using a school-issued Chromebook can also be accessed using any internet-connected device(s) that you may have at home. Ms. Orvick recommends Chrome as the best browser. (Please note: We have received some questions about Chromebooks in the last couple of days. Please know that we are working on this, and we will provide an update about this topic as soon as we are able.)

Meals for Students

During the period of school closure, meals for students will not be served at Hart-Ransom Elementary School. Instead, parents may go to another location in our community to pick up meals for their students. These meals are available for any child age 18 or younger, and the child must be present with the parent in order to pick up the meals (certain exceptions may apply). We have posted a document on the school website and on the district website called “Grab and Go Meal Locations,” which provides information about a variety of “Grab and Go” meal pick-up locations. This document will be updated as new information becomes available.

Conclusion

Even though our circumstances have changed dramatically, our care for your children and commitment to their learning have not changed. Our team will do its best to be available and supportive to you and your children throughout the period of school closure this year, however long that may be. Please communicate with our team if there is any way that we can help you during this time. We are eagerly anticipating the time when we can reopen our school, and we look forward to seeing you in person again at that time. Until then, stay safe and healthy, and make the most of the time with your loved ones.

Best regards,



Matthew Shipley
Superintendent