

August 3, 2020

Dear Palo Alto HS Families,

In just two weeks we are going to kick-off the 2020-2021 school year. Normally, the general information regarding school opening is a continuum of the previous year—same format, different year. With starting off in distance learning, we are suddenly confronted with a completely different format and a very different year. As with everything around us, the opening up of Paly is going to look very different this year. Our goal for the opening of this school year is to continue to provide excellent educational opportunities for all students and to connect students virtually with spirit, enthusiasm, and opportunities for engagement. I would like to provide you with some updates on our progress and plans for the school opening. You will also continue to receive updates from me as more of the details regarding the start of this school year are finalized.

### The Week Before School

We will be using the following schedule for students to return any books from last year, pick-up books for this school year as well as any required equipment necessary for the first quarter.

Wednesday, August 12—10th grade pick-up

Thursday, August 13—11th grade pick-up

Friday, August 14—9th grade pick-up (P.M.)

Monday, August 17—12th grade pick-up.

The 9th grade students will be participating in a virtual 9th Grade Orientation the morning of Friday, August 14 and their pick-up time will be that same afternoon. The 12th grade pick-up is scheduled for the afternoon of August 17th, to allow for seniors to uphold the tradition of wearing their camouflage gear on campus for the first day of school. Additional details and expectations, for all of the activities during the week before school, will be communicated by the beginning of next week.

### First Week of School

For the first week of school, we will be using a schedule that will allow us to include student engagement activities and academic classes. We are still working on the details of the schedule with a final version expected to be communicated to students and parents before the end of this week. The week will include daily school-wide webinars to start out each day, meetings with students' advisory groups, grade-level meetings, and academic class periods.

### Student Schedules

Students will be informed of their class schedule Sunday, August 9, at 5pm. The following courses are not being offered due either to low enrollment or COVID complications: Advanced Problem Solving, Digital Art Spectrum, Game Design, Japanese 1, Sports Lit, Sports Nutrition. Counselors will be communicating to students, who signed up for these courses, very soon to identify an alternate course when

needed. Complete details and expectations, regarding student schedules, including change requests, will be sent out to students and parents later this week.

### Distance Learning Planning

I have been meeting and planning constantly, over the past several weeks, in order to design and implement a distance learning model that will accommodate the needs of students, staff, and parents. I have been meeting with a group of Paly staff members who have identified best practices for distance teaching and learning, including professional development opportunities for enhancing teachers' practice. The Paly Wellness Team has been meeting to develop activities for the first week of school as well as the implementation of a virtual student wellness program to support our students.

I have been meeting with student groups over the summer, including regular meetings with our ASB officers. At our last meeting together, students provided input on the first-week schedule, including ideas for student connectedness. They have been providing input and perspective on best online learning experiences, which will be valuable input when planning for professional development activities for staff prior to the start of the school year.

I have heard from our parent community about their experiences in the spring with distance learning. From individual emails and conversations to formal meetings with the PTSA and Site Council, I have been provided with essential parent input which will inform the planning implementation of our distance learning program.

### Distance Learning Expectations

There are several areas of distance learning being addressed and will soon be communicated further to parents and students. Together, as an entire staff, we will be working on identifying a consistent format for Schoology and communication methods to students. With our synchronized learning schedules, students will be expected to attend classes virtually at the designated start time. The length of the synchronized learning experience will be determined by the teacher (independent and/or small group learning time might be assigned), but will always begin at the designated start time. Student attendance will be taken each period, using Infinite Campus. Prior to the start of the school year, we will be communicating agreed-upon expectations for students and staff, which will include zoom expectations and protocols, attendance, and grading.

### Upcoming Town Hall Meetings

The PTAC is hosting webinars with Dr. Don Austin and the Leadership Cabinet this Tuesday for elementary and Wednesday for secondary. Here are the links:

- Elementary School Town Hall will be held Monday, August 3rd at 5:30PM. Please tune in here: [https://youtu.be/Kg\\_uHIE\\_uGE](https://youtu.be/Kg_uHIE_uGE)
- Secondary School Town Hall will be held on Tuesday, August 4th at 5:30PM. Please tune in here: <https://youtu.be/-6q223x9KFU>

For more information, please visit the PTAC Website: <https://ptac.paloaltopta.org/> or email: [council@paloaltopta.org](mailto:council@paloaltopta.org)

You will continue to receive updates, regarding the start-up of the school year, as the details are finalized. Once we get the school year underway, all secondary school administrators will be sending weekly updates on Wednesdays to our school communities. This is the most unusual school start-up I have ever experienced and I know that every one of us wants the best for our students. I am confident that the Paly Community will rise to the challenge and support both the unknown and an exciting future.

With Gratitude,  
Brent Kline, Principal