

EDUCATION COMMITTEE INTERVIEWS WITH AREA SUPERINTENDENTS
 SHADED AREAS REPRESENT CONSISTENT ANSWERS FROM ALL INTERVIEWED SUPERINTENDENTS

Lawndale Elementary District Betsy Hamilton, Superintendent February 17, 2021	Redondo Beach Unified School District Steven Keller, Superintendent, Annette Alpern, Deputy Supt. Administrative Services, Nicole Wesley, Asst. Superintendent Human Resources February 17, 2021	Hawthorne School District Helen Morgan, Superintendent February 22, 2021	Hermosa Beach City School District Jason Johnson, Superintendent March 1, 2021	El Segundo Unified School District Melissa Moore, Superintendent and Marissa Janicek, Asst. Superintendent March 2, 2021	Manhattan Beach Unified School District Mike Matthews Superintendent March 12, 2021
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What are the major challenges for teachers, staff and students during the pandemic?

- Many children did not have devices or connectivity, and districts needed to provide them as soon as possible.
- Getting consistent guidelines, and dealing with multiple, competing agencies, with changing expectations interfered with ongoing and effective planning.
- Developing consistent communication was difficult due to the multiple and sometimes daily changes in city/county/state protocols.
- Lack of childcare was challenging for families, especially for younger children who also needed online support.
- Children missed their friends and daily interactions/lack of socialization opportunities/missing the structured classroom setting.
- Teachers had to adapt to new and multiple platforms, with varying levels of tech expertise. Professional development supported both teachers and families to embrace and utilize on-line platforms successfully.
- Keeping students challenged and engaged was difficult. KNOWING that students are engaged is a challenge. In low-income areas, finding a quiet place to work online is a challenge. Households with multiple aged children was challenging.
- More advantaged children can play outside in their own yards; however, children living in congregate housing and poorer areas, are basically LIVING INSIDE THEIR APARTMENTS WITH LITTLE OUTSIDE CONTACT.
- Cohort groups needed to be formed. e.g., providing students with special needs in-person instruction.
- Counseling, both individual /group/programmatic support were important aspects of the school program and needed to be increased, especially looking forward to reentry. All districts have focused on social and emotional needs.
- Families with multiple children of varying ages made scheduling online learning more challenging for families.
- All districts provided teacher professional development to ensure on-line teaching comfort/competence; family support was provided.
- Without in-person connections, identifying children who are struggling is more challenging.

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<p>Getting devices and connectivity to our families was the first order of business.</p> <p>Individual support was provided for the most vulnerable students.</p>	<p>All protocols had to be thought out (with input from all constituents), written down, and shared/posted for all participants.</p>	<p>Providing access to devices and connectivity was critical.</p> <p>Food insecurity for our families is a reality. Extended “seamless summer”. We have provided 1.7 million meals during the pandemic.</p> <p>Hawthorne families have experienced significant illness, second only to Lennox.</p>	<p>Developed cohort groups which included extra support for children who needed it.</p> <p>Initially we provided continuity for students and families developing asynchronous schedules, adopting one platform- Zoom.</p>	<p>Services, instruction, and the total program had to be developed and evolved through collaboration of all partners in order to provide a coherent, quality program.</p>	<p>Schools closed on a Friday and distance learning began the next Monday.</p> <p>There was a need for tech. professional development which began right away. Significant professional development was provided in Spring and Summer, 2020.</p> <p>We adopted one platform that makes it easier for all constituents.</p>

What has been your experience in working with state and county during this period? How have they assisted you?

- All Superintendents felt that everyone has done the very best possible job under the current conditions.
- Circumstances and plans changed regularly. Who was in charge also changed often, making planning difficult. Multiple plans had to be developed to meet the changing regulations and directions.
- All districts developed plans based on the most current information provided. Flexibility and ability to pivot were important.
- Meeting (virtually), regularly with 12 Superintendents helped provide support, shared planning. (SW SELPA).
- SB 98 passed into law in July and made significant changes to class sizes, funding requirements, attendance requirements, and required instructional minutes. The changes allowed districts to meet requirements without being penalized monetarily.
- When advocacy was needed for planned activities (e.g., utilizing block schedules for secondary students), Dr. Ferrer and Dr. Gilcheck were very helpful and responded rapidly.

Federal funding through the CARES Act and Learning Loss Mitigation funding helped with PPE, signage, plexiglass, and HVAC upgraded.

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Has your district experienced a decline in enrollment? Do you know where the students have gone?

- The largest loss has been in the elementary schools. Some loss at the secondary schools.
- Affluent area schools' lost students to private schools and learning pods.
- Families who have left, do not want to be removed from the rolls, with the hope they will return.

Schools in less affluent areas had families moving out of the area, and the students will probably not return.

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Exit information shows it is mainly financial reasons for leaving, with people leaving the state for more affordable housing. Many families move to the Inland Empire.	Redondo has lost about 3%. This is fewer than neighboring districts. Most of the losses have been in early childhood-Pre-K, Transition Kindergarten, and kindergarten.	Hawthorne has had declining enrollment for several years of about 250 students a year, due to rising housing costs. The families are moving to the Inland Empire, Las Vegas, Oklahoma. Kindergarten, which is not mandatory, has had significant losses, with parents keeping them in childcare or home.	Hermosa has had the most dramatic loss of all neighboring districts. Loss of 12% (about 150-160 students.) The District is focusing on "finding" and contacting the students with a goal of having them return.	There has been some student loss to private schools. The district is reaching out to families who have left.	Enrollment was 6400. MBUSD had lost about 400 students who have gone to other states with open schools, "camps". 60% of them are planning to return. The district is reaching out to families who have left. Some staff layoffs due to declining enrollment and MBEF fundraising challenges.

Do you think teachers will want to use what they have learned during this time to incorporate more technology into their instruction after returning to in-person learning?

- Many teachers will incorporate what they have learned into their in-person teaching and learning.
- The teaching staff is definitely more comfortable and confident using technology in their teaching. All districts have provided initial professional development and ongoing support throughout the school closure. Teachers learned a variety of platforms.
- It is expected that teachers will keep what has been working, and replace some strategies and curriculum that previously have not worked as well as online.
- Parents were provided on-line support on how to assist teachers in helping children.

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- **Some students have not done well with distance learning. Identifying them is a challenge,**

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<p>Teachers have embraced distance learning including asynchronous learning so students can learn at their own pace.</p> <p>Professional development is recorded and teachers can learn at their own pace.</p>	<p>The district provided 4 days of professional development at the beginning of the 20-21 school year; ongoing assistance was available.</p> <p>Teachers had an excellent start to online teaching.</p>	<p>Groups of teachers were given weekly support.</p> <p>There was a district IT person available for assistance.</p>	<p>Teachers were paid to become IT coaches and were available to assist teachers.</p> <p>Our end game is not distance learning, but in-person interactive teaching and learning.</p>	<p>We have had in-person learning since December for our early education learners.</p> <p>WE HAVE A PAUSE ON USING TECHNOLOGY IN THE IN-PERSON CLASSROOMS. We want in-person learning to focus on reading, math, and social emotional learning. We have limited in-person learning time, so we want personal interaction to be the focus.</p>	<p>Adopting one platform is supportive to teachers and students.</p> <p>Tech integration will continue beyond the pandemic.</p> <p>When school has to close (air quality, threats, etc.) familiarity with technology will allow teaching and learning to convert to distance learning.</p>

Have you partnered with social service agencies in the area?

- All of the districts have strong collaborative relationships with area providers, as there is and has been a **STRONG FOCUS** on social-emotional needs of children, families, and school staff. Districts will continue to make social-emotional health a priority.
- The need for support will be even greater.
- All interviewed districts have an MOU with the Beach Cities Health District for vaccine distribution that began March 1, 2021.
- Social-emotional learning is integrated into all professional development and is integrated into daily instruction.
- All districts are focusing on identifying children in need. Districts incorporate social-emotional learning into the classroom/and make referrals to local agencies, as needed and will continue to do so.

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- Due to distance learning, it is difficult to see how well the students are faring; however, with in-person learning taking place now, observation and supports can be matched to students in need more easily. KNOWING about the need has been more difficult with distance learning. Some parents have shared issues and requested supports.
- Some students have not done well with distance learning. Identifying them is a challenge,
- BCHD is providing COVID-19 vaccines to all staff.
- Referrals to partner agencies provide support to students and parents.

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<p>Prior to the pandemic, we appointed a Coordinator of Safety and Risk Management, who is working with BCHD.</p> <p>We have a full-time social worker and a partnership with USC School of Social Work with 50 or more interns working with our schools. Each school has a full-time social worker.</p>	<p>BCHD has been a "Platinum Partner with RBUSD.</p> <p>We utilize South Bay Families Connected and South Bay Children's Health Center.</p> <p>Social emotional learning opportunities are available on a website for family learning and support.</p>	<p>Richstone Family Center is an ongoing partner and will continue to provide services and supports.</p>	<p>We increased our half-time counselor to a full-time counselor.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal position shifted to an additional counselor, as daily discipline needs have diminished due to distance learning, and more social-emotional support will be needed. Counseling groups have been formed.</p>	<p>Partnering with the South Bay Consortium, South Bay Families Connected, and CARE SOLACE, plus continuing PPS staff.</p> <p>We are using the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence RULER which conducts research and teaches people of all ages to develop their emotional Intelligence and supports children to recognize, understand, and label their feelings and to become empowered to self-regulate.</p> <p>We are providing additional in-person activities for our high school seniors and 6th graders, focusing on</p>	<p>Parents have related a positive change after the first day of in-person learning. The child who came home was a different, happier child from the one who left in the morning.</p> <p>MBUSD is continuing the work with partners., including BCHD, and South Bay Children's Health Center.</p>

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What are the major obstacles or changes that have been made in order to return to in-person instruction?

- New sanitation protocols are in place.
- Social distancing has been built into all opening plans in all districts. Schedules reflect smaller cohorts of students, with a third of students attending at a time.
- COVID-19 funds have and are being utilized to pay for all modifications.
- Children are adjusting well.
- Work with the unions has contributed to the success in districts' ability to move to in-person learning.
- Secondary sites have more complex planning for a return to in-person learning due to block schedules for a return to in-person learning, as guidelines prohibit moving students out of their cohort. There has to be one consistent learning group, which is not how block schedules work.
- Many new skills have been learned. These new skills should be assessed and embraced.

What do you want the community to know?

- All of the Superintendents had HIGH PRAISE for teachers and staff, stating that the collaboration and cooperation and ongoing professionalism ensured the strongest teaching and learning possible for the school communities.
- All of the superintendents stated that the collaborative online weekly meetings with the other superintendents was extraordinary for solving problems, sharing ideas, and providing ongoing planning and support to one another. It created a positive learning community for all.
- It is difficult to convey how much planning was needed to meet student needs due to constantly changing requirements.
- Second language students and students receiving special education services were provided instruction throughout the pandemic.
- All districts have been collecting data through surveys of parents and students, and using student work to plan for successful in-person re-entry.
- Data will determine next steps for each district.
- COVID funds have been utilized to support the changes needed to buildings, and personnel.
- Districts are following Department of Public Health requirements in distancing, ventilation, sanitation, opening requirements.
- Food distribution has been provided through district food services.
- South_Bay schools have been in the forefront of the county in opening schools.

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<p>Lawndale is a resilient community. Families are engaged and care deeply about their children and each other.</p> <p>When filling gaps, we are focusing on evidence plus equity.</p> <p>We will have to support our families, as the East side corridor had four times higher COVID rate.</p> <p>Many of our families have experienced illness, due to greater risk in the community.</p> <p>Convincing families that school is safe will be one of our challenges.</p>	<p>Impact from the pandemic will continue beyond this year.</p> <p>Measuring regression and how to compensate remains a challenge. Measuring student progress will be ongoing.</p> <p>RBUSD is providing a daily intervention period for support when students do not appear to be understanding the material.</p> <p>Needs/measurement tools are being recalibrated.</p> <p>We are proud to be one of twelve, out of 80, Los Angeles County districts that is open.</p>	<p>We are VERY PROUD of the program and support that we have provided for students.</p> <p>The district is researching and exploring ways to mitigate learning loss.</p> <p>Prior to the pandemic, there was 1 additional teacher assigned for support per site. Going forward, there will now be 2 support teachers per site.</p> <p>Tutors will provide 1:1 support.</p>	<p>The Hermosa Beach Educators' Association is on board, signing an agreement in August to return to the classroom as soon as possible. They were one of the first in the County to ask to return to in-person learning.</p> <p>The union represents ALL district employees and has been a GREAT partner.</p> <p>As a very small school district, we had extremely limited resources to develop all of the state and local requirements which were not scaled for small districts.</p>	<p>We provide MONDAY time for teachers to collaborate, and coordinate grade level lessons and expectations. "Mondays are like GOLD"</p> <p>Benchmark assessments indicate many of our children have been making strong learning gains.</p> <p>We will continue successful intervention strategies, as needed.</p> <p>Students with learning gaps, will receive support and summer intervention, as needed.</p> <p>We were one of 5 districts that reopened in Dec. for pre-K-2.</p>	<p>We are advocating for the kids. We want them in school which is essential for both social and educational learning. There has been no competition. only collaboration with the other South Bay school districts and support for the benefit and well-being of students.</p> <p>MBUSD opened pre-schools and childcare in Sept.; high need special education classes in Oct.; TK-2nd grades in Dec.; grades 3-5 on March 1; 6th grade on March 8; 1,400 athletes are practicing. We are awaiting guidance from the county re: HS opening.</p>