

El Paso Education Initiative, Inc.

Howard Burnham Elementary School * DaVinci School for Science & the Arts * Vista Del Futuro Elementary School
* The Linguistic Academy of El Paso – A Cultural Demonstration Site

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July 10, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, School Staff, and Community,

I hope that you are well and safe.

Unlikely as it may seem, we find ourselves in the middle of the summer already, which means that school is right around the corner. However, the situation is totally different this year for school openings from what it has been in the past. We finished the last three and one-half months of the past school year teaching our students via virtual learning. It was a sudden and unexpected pandemic that caused schools across the nation and around the world to discover new ways to educate children. It is now July 10th, and we have learned many lessons from last spring's experience.

We have learned that children learn best in a face-to-face pedagogical environment. Most educational experts proclaim that receiving lessons in a purely technological setting causes most children to perform at a 30% deficit from the traditional teacher-to-student and student-to-student setting. It is difficult to substitute solely technological classrooms for person-to-person classrooms. That is not to say that students did not learn and progress in a distance learning program, as some students actually received better grades in some classes and preferred the virtual learning platform

The Texas Education Agency has recommended that schools in Texas consider two teaching approaches for the coming school year. The first of the approaches would be to have the students attend classes as usual and receive face-to-face teaching. The second approach would be to have students receive instruction in a virtual manner. The Burnham Wood Charter Schools has decided that we will use a "combination model." That is, some or all students may attend school in person, and a portion of our students may elect to receive instruction digitally. Both methods will allow the flexibility of the usage of face-to-face instruction and digital instruction. If a student and/or parent selects face-to-face instruction, but later decides that they would like to change their selection, the student and parents will be interviewed by the school administration to decide which method of instruction the student will undertake. The same option will be available for the students who select digital delivery instruction. Your local campus will conduct a survey next week by phone to gather information and input from parents as to which instructional delivery method the parent and/or student would prefer.

The big factor that we as educators and you as parents are unable to control is the coronavirus factor. Schools are reopening based on directives from the Governor, the Commissioner of Education, and the local health authorities. If any one of these entities or any combination of these entities give us new directives, we may have to follow the directive.

What you can expect, is that the school and classrooms will have new rules and regulations that will govern the day-to-day activities of students and staff. These rules will include, but not be limited to: 1) The usage of face masks at all times by anyone on campus; 2) Frequent washing of hands with soap and water or usage of hand sanitizer throughout the school day; 3) The observation of the six feet social distancing rule when feasible; 4) Daily temperature and oxygen checks. **Safety and security for our students and staff is our number one concern.** To that end, we will conduct extra sanitizing of all rooms, all equipment, all furniture, all door knobs, and all bathrooms on a daily basis.

Some important dates of which to be aware regarding the opening of school are:

July 27, 2020	District office staff and principals return to work
August 3, 2020	Teachers return to work (may be a virtual return)
August 10, 2020	Students return to school virtually – Instruction begins

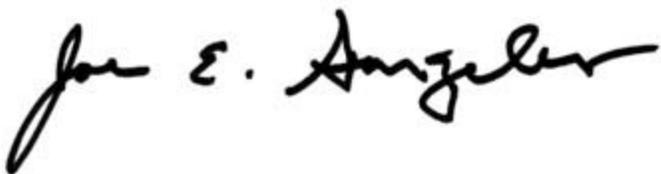
Originally, as per the then current Texas Education Agency guidelines, our district was preparing to receive students on their August 10 return date, some attending face-to-face in their classrooms and other attending digitally via distance learning. However, the very day the letter informing parents and staff of the plans for return to school was being prepared, our district received notification from the El Paso Mayor and the El Paso Health Department that directed us not to allow any students on campus until after September 7, 2020. Therefore, we need to start all students via virtual learning until further direction from the Mayor and the Health Department allows students to begin on-campus classes.

Some extra days off have been added to our school calendar. These dates are referred to as “Intersession Break” days. They are placed on the calendar in case they are needed for coronavirus days off.

In other district news, a new principal, Ms. Ana Candelaria, has been appointed for Vista Elementary. Ms. Candelaria is already a member of the Vista staff, having served a short period of time as counselor. She brings a great deal of knowledge and experience to the position. Ms. Candelaria has selected Ms. Julie Contreras to be the Assistant Principal. We are happy and proud to have these two individuals leading Vista Elementary into the new school year. In addition, we have received very favorable notifications from the Texas Education Agency: Vista Elementary has been granted a school expansion amendment which allows us to add three-year-old and four-year-old preschool for the 2020-2021 school year. And secondly, the Burnham Wood Charter School District has been awarded district-level program allotment monies to provide mentor teacher guidance to every new teacher hired for the new school year.

Lastly, you can expect correspondence from your campus principals next week. This correspondence will give you more detail and specifics for return to school commitments and activities for each campus.

Have a good rest of the summer.



Howard Burnham
Elementary Charter School



DAVINCI
SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE & THE ARTS



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