



AZUSA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# COVID-19 Operations Written Report



ADOPTED JUNE 23, 2020

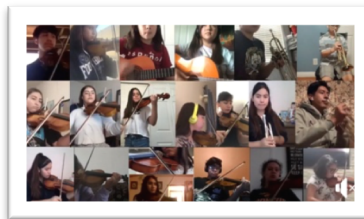
## Overview of Program Changes & Impact

COVID-19 brought tremendous change and challenges to the Azusa Unified School District community. With the closure of our physical schools and the initiation of distance learning, the programs the district offered shifted to align with the new reality of meeting our students' needs virtually. Keeping in mind the multiple and differing needs of students, Azusa USD made focused changes to programs aimed at providing equitable education for students. The most significant change to our programs came in the form of the Azusa USD Distance Learning Block Schedule Plan (DLBSP). This distance learning plan was carefully and methodically developed by the Education Services Department. In anticipation of the closures, district leadership began to develop a two-phase learning plan for our students in early March (details of the plan are outlined in a later section of this document). Accompanying the plan for students was a robust plan for professional learning.

### Professional Learning for Staff

The distance learning plan included significant opportunities for teachers to access professional learning around the base-learning curriculum, virtual instructional strategies, as well as the use of technology. One full week of professional learning took place for teachers and administrators prior to

the start of the phase 2 DLBSP and a second full week of virtual workshops were offered during the 5th week. These well-attended workshops included training on Google Classroom applications, digital whiteboards, BlackBoard, and Tech 101 to name a few. Weekly, the teachers on special assignment (TOSAs) who serve as district-wide instructional leaders, offered elementary and secondary curriculum and technology support, training in effective strategies for students with disabilities, as well as



opportunities for content and grade-level teams to collaborate, share ideas, and plan instruction.

Professional learning was scheduled and developed based upon data collected from teachers indicating their needs. Additionally, in place of previously planned in-person opportunities, Azusa USD offered virtual professional learning for the district's new science curriculum adoption. All elementary

teachers and all secondary science teachers were invited to attend. Each grade level and/or content area received two 1.5 hour sessions. Further opportunities for science professional learning were shifted to the Fall and will continue throughout the 8-year adoption cycle.

All other Spring conferences and in-person professional learning opportunities for district staff were canceled or postponed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 emergency. Our teachers did have opportunities to attend several virtual workshops and trainings offered by the California Department of Education, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, and other education organizations. Workshop and training topics addressed the immediate needs of students during the COVID-19 emergency and transition to distance learning.



## College/Career Readiness

The district continued to offer college preparatory courses and programs, including IB, AVID, AP, and the Early College Program. All courses were integrated into the DLBSP and included online instruction. While AP exams were available online for our students in the AP program, the International Baccalaureate organization canceled all IB exams. Azusa USD IB students will earn credit and diplomas based upon their course completion rather than exam results for the 2020 graduating class. The College Board also canceled the March SAT and PSAT exams leading to the cancelation of Azusa USD's SAT School Day scheduled for March 25. Counselors at the district's high schools continued to virtually support students in college preparation, career preparation, and course selection. All Career Pathways courses continued. Unfortunately, the district was forced to cancel all Spring and Summer internships for students with local businesses.

## Student & Community Engagement

The district and schools continued to hold parent and family meetings during physical closures. Participation in these virtual and bilingual forums, such as Coffee with the Principal, recognition ceremonies, Superintendent's Round Table, graduation input groups, and advisory committees saw increased participation on the part of our families.

Some decision-making committees such as the District English Language Advisory Committees (DELAC) and the Parent Advisory Committee Plus (PAC+) met virtually as well, providing continued collaboration in their focus areas. In the development of this COVID-19 Operations Written Report, the PAC+ was afforded an opportunity to review and provide input and feedback on the report contents prior to public presentation at our June 23 School Board meeting.

At all schools, teachers and administrators made connections with students beyond distance learning to ensure students' voices were heard in decisions and that students felt supported and encouraged as they navigated the challenges brought about by COVID-19. Azusa USD initiated extensive outreach efforts to students and families beginning the first day of school physical closure. At the school level, several thousand contacts were made with students and families through email, phone calls, and texts. The contacts included addressing academic, social/emotional, and physical health support. At the district level, staff made over 5000 contacts with families regarding Chromebook check out, internet access support, and other needs facing families, including physical and emotional health services.

As Azusa USD began to plan for the following school year, parents and students were enlisted to be part of the district's Reopening School

Imagination Team. Twenty-nine members of this diverse group of employees, parents, and students met weekly to collaboratively develop an innovative plan to safely re-open Azusa USD schools.

## Communications

The district expanded communication to all Azusa USD families, students, and staff. The Superintendent sent Community Updates twice a week detailing important information about program changes and plans for addressing needs. Additionally, ongoing notifications regarding meal distribution, distance learning, grading, graduations, registration for the 20-21 school year, and COVID-19 resources were shared regularly on all of the district's social media accounts, through the district app and website, and through email. School sites also increased their communication through all electronic platforms and reached out by phone to families and students.



## SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS DURING SCHOOL HOURS

While Azusa USD was not able to safely provide childcare during school hours due to the statewide COVID-19 Stay Home order, the district supported families by providing official school closure letters for parents to submit to employers. The district was also prepared to direct families to organizations and resources that were providing help with child supervision during school hours.



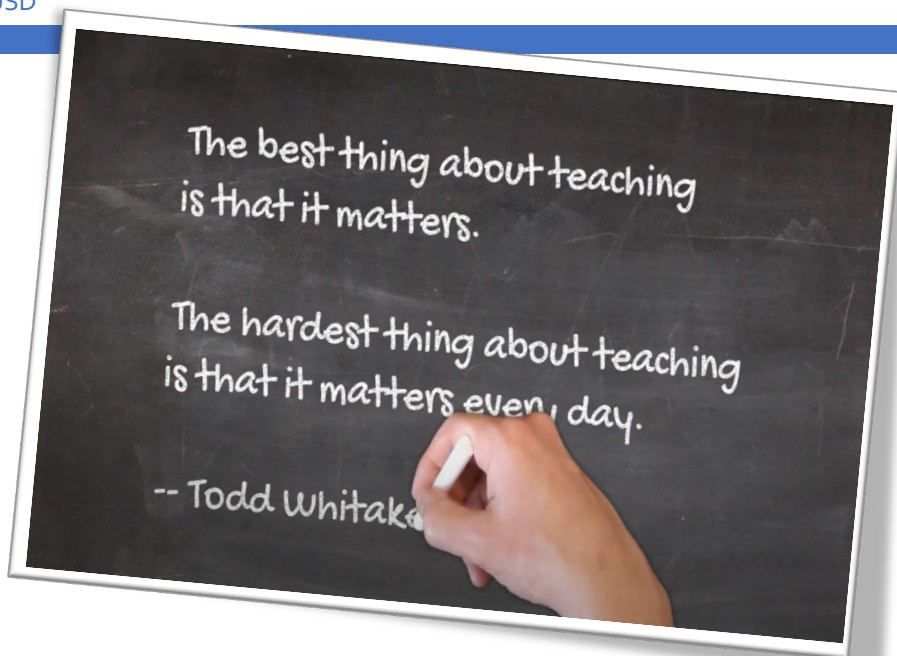
# Distance Learning

Once school closures took place, Azusa USD entered into Phase I of distance learning which consisted of optional grade-level/content specific and supplemental coursework. This work was available on the district's website and for pick up by appointment at the District Office. Azusa USD entered Phase 2 of distance learning with the full implementation of the **Distance Learning Block Schedule Plan (DLBSP)**. One week of professional learning was dedicated to preparing staff for DLBSP implementation. All students in pre-school (PK) through grade 12 had access to DLBSP, many through Chromebooks distributed by Azusa USD as well as personally owned devices. If desired by families, hard copies of all curriculum were provided for elementary students as well. The Elementary DLBSP contained a base learning component delivered by all teachers at all grade levels. Instructional times were blocked for each grade level- PK through grade 5. All elementary students covered the same content and standards based upon a grade-level DLBSP pacing guide. The secondary DLBSP was blocked into content areas with students accessing their classes during different times and days. Teachers delivered instruction through Google Classroom, Class Dojo, Google Meets, Blackboard, email, and other online platforms. Beyond academic instructions, students had opportunities to participate in live class meetings and social time, story time, meetings with



administrators, and virtual field trips.

*Azusa High, Gladstone High and Sierra High Seniors were presented with yard signs to celebrate graduation (joint AUSD/City of Azusa project). All three schools held drive-thru graduations*



Teachers used standards-based subject matter curriculum coupled with online instructional strategies to deliver high-quality learning for all students, including those with exceptional needs. District approved curriculum continued to be used to deliver instruction.

As part of the DLBSP, students and their families had additional, weekly access to teachers, counselors, administrators, and community liaisons outside of the blocked instruction times. The Student and Family Connections time block each Wednesday afternoon provided support in the areas of academic, social-emotional, and physical needs.

Teacher collaboration, through professional learning community (PLC) work and TOSA-led workshops continued during school physical closure with opportunities available every week for collaboration and learning. In addition, teachers and administrators at each school site met weekly to address student needs and develop improvements to DLBSP teaching and learning.

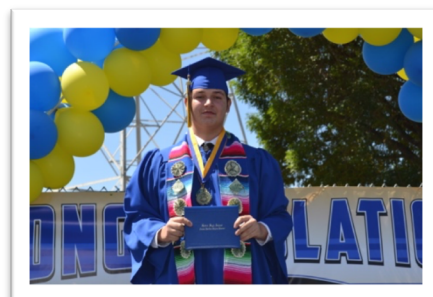
Students with disabilities continued to receive services aligned to their IEPs accounting for necessary adaptations. Some services were provided via teletherapy. The district scheduled IEP meetings which were held virtually for students with disabilities during school physical closure. Teachers adapted and created accommodations and

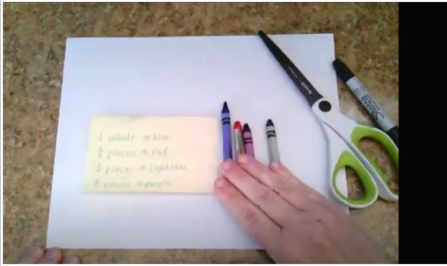
modifications to virtual learning in order to serve students with disabilities.

The DLBSP provided all Azusa USD students access to valuable learning during the difficult COVID-19 emergency. Grading and assessment of learning was adjusted in consideration of the tremendous challenges



being faced by students and families. At the elementary level, teacher comments and descriptions were used to provide information on student progress. At the secondary level, all letter grades were replaced with Credit/No Credit assessments of student progress. Secondary students whose grade point average would be improved by a letter grade were able to request a letter grade instead of a Credit/No Credit mark.





*In addition to addressing academic needs, schools provided time for social/emotional needs through gatherings such as this Share Your Pet meeting at Ellington School.*

## Meeting the Needs of English Learners, Low-Income Students & Foster Youth

Azusa USD cares deeply about providing equitable education to our most high needs students. This commitment did not waiver during the COVID-19 emergency. Low-income students, English learners, and foster youth were issued district Chromebooks for use during distance learning (DLBSP). The district distributed over 5000 devices to students for use in accessing curriculum and instruction. District staff assisted families in connecting to the internet through special programs offered by service providers. Twenty-four (24) families experiencing severe challenges in accessing the internet were provided district WiFi hotspots/internet access. A dedicated Technology Support email and phone line connected families with support for technology use at home.

Furthermore, The 1-Million Project and Rotary Club partnered with Azusa USD by purchasing 25 additional WiFi hotspots and 48 internet activated tablets for high need families. Additional funding for internet connectivity was



also provided by the Azusa Ministerial Association.

Child Welfare and Attendance staff contacted all foster youth and their families for welfare checks and to ensure students were successfully accessing the DLBSP. Foster youth along with low-income students were also able to access financial support in purchasing graduation caps and gowns. In addition to meeting the needs of our foster youth, district staff and teachers also contacted all Newcomer students (English learners who have been in the United States for one year or less) to confirm they were able to access the academic programs and offer support for health and emotional needs. A summer school program was specifically designed to address the learning needs of Newcomers. Additionally, Azusa USD also distributed school supplies to all students who needed them during school physical closures.

Resource teachers and interventionists provided English learners, low-income students, and foster youth additional academic support through online live instruction, teleconference meetings, and through Google Classroom (where students could access assignments in their own timeframe). The additional support focused on helping students meet grade-level standards and helping parents/families with

resources and strategies to support learning at home. Low-income students, English learners, and foster youth also had access to additional academic support through partner organizations, such as Think Together and Neighborhood Homework House.

Designated and integrated English Language Development, monitoring of academic progress, and reclassifications continued for English learners during the COVID-19 emergency. Azusa USD shifted to virtually providing these supports and resources to comply with the California Stay Home order. For example, changes to the reclassification process included consultations with families and teachers being held online or by telephone rather than in person. Intense monitoring and instruction for Newcomer English learners took place, providing them academic and language acquisition support along with social, emotional, and healthcare resources. Outreach by district staff ensured that all Newcomers were supported in continuing their education through the DLBSP.





# Meal Distribution

Azusa USD developed a safe meal distribution program that ensured families were able to access meals for children ages 0-18. Drive-thru (meals placed in trunks) and walk-up meal pick up was made available at four of the district's schools (Azusa High School, Gladstone High School, Murray Elementary, and Slauson Middle). The district provided five days of breakfast, lunch, and supper over two distribution days. Azusa USD was one of the very few districts to offer supper to children. On Mondays, families could pick up two days' worth of meals and on Wednesdays, three days' worth of meals were distributed. In late May, distribution moved to one day a week (providing five days' worth of meals). While the initial program required students to be in the cars or accompanying parents to walk-up tables, a QR code scan system was developed by Azusa USD to alleviate the need for all children to be physically present and to increase safety to families and employees by scanning through car windows. The QR code scan system was highly effective, it increased safety, and created a very efficient way to implement meal distribution and plan purchases from week to week to meet the needs of the community.

Nutrition Services staff, classified staff, administrators, and contracted employees participated in meal distribution at the four school sites. Upwards of 90 people a day worked to prepare, transport, and distribute meals to children. The district distributed an average of 30,957 meals a week. Azusa USD applied for and was awarded grant funding that increased the amount of fresh produce the district could provide and allowed for the purchase of necessary materials and supplies. Additionally, local businesses generously donated grocery bags for meals. Some of these local businesses included Chick-fil-A, Raising Cane's, Target, and Smart and Final. Furthermore, both Chick-fil-A and Raising Cane's donated over 500 gift cards that were also distributed to families during meal pick up.



## INFORMATION

### Azusa Unified School District Board of Education

President: Jeri Bibles-Vogel  
 Vice President: Gabriela Arellanes  
 Clerk: Adrian Greer  
 Member: Xilonin Cruz-Gonzalez  
 Member: Yolanda Rodriguez-Peña

### Azusa Unified School District Executive Leadership

Superintendent: Linda Kaminski, Ed.D.  
 Interim Deputy Superintendent: Arturo Ortega  
 Assistant Superintendent Business Services: Marc Bommarito  
 Assistant Superintendent Human Resources: Jorge Ronquillo

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