

FAQs PUSD Learning Options 2021-22

General Registration Questions

Q: Why do we have to make a selection in April during registration?

A: Hiring and staffing decisions for each learning option are made based on parent selections during registration. This process is time consuming and complex, so we need accurate data as soon as possible.

Q: When is the school year anticipated to start?

A: The 2021-22 school year begins August 18, 2021 for most PUSD students. For Abraxas students, the first day is July 15, 2021, and for Valley Elementary students, the first day is August 2, 2021.

Q: Can I make a change to my selection before the school year starts?

A: It is possible, if space allows at your school of residence or within other learning options. Please notify your school ASAP of any changes before the school year begins.

Q: How long is the commitment to a learning option?

A: For a minimum of a complete grading period (trimester or quarter).

Q: Can we change learning options during the school year, mid-year?

A: Yes, at the grading period, if space allows at your school of residence or within other learning options.

Q: Can students with IEPs select any of these learning options?

A: Any learning option may be considered as a placement option by your child's IEP team, but the IEP team will need to meet and discuss your child's learning needs, goals, and services to determine if they can be met in this placement.

On Campus Learning (TK-12 grades)

Q: Will teachers be teaching concurrently (in-person students and virtual students at the same time)?

A: No, teachers will be focused on teaching in-person students only. In a few instances, unique courses may be taught concurrently to expand access to students at other schools. (i.e. Mandarin at Del Norte HS)

Q: Will all teachers be back in the classroom teaching in-person students for 2021-2022?

A: Yes, in-person teachers will teach from their classrooms daily, five days per week.

Q: Will students need to continue to bring their laptop to class when on campus?

A: Yes, teachers will integrate technology with 1:1 devices to personalize learning pathways for students through playlists and adaptive learning platforms like iReady. Students will be able to

work at their own level and pace to meet their learning goals. Students will not be on Zoom with their in-person teachers, except for rare instances (such as quarantine).

Health and Safety Measures

We will be following the latest health and safety protocols in place from the California Department of Public Health. Such mitigation strategies might be physical distancing, mask wearing and hand washing. There will also be staff cleaning high touch areas and hand washing, hand sanitizer stations will remain on campus.

Q: Will there be physical distancing between students in classrooms? Will class sizes be reduced?

A: Currently PUSD is following public guidelines of six feet between staff and students, three feet between students, from seat center to seat center. PUSD is looking into potentially reducing class sizes at specific grade levels temporarily, starting at 4th and 5th grade and above, to allow for physical distancing. Class sizes will remain the same for TK through 3rd grades. We will ensure physical distancing is followed based on the latest CDPH guidelines.

Q: Will masks be required?

A: Mask wearing will be required if mandated by the state and local guidelines.

Q: Will there be health screenings on campus?

A: We will have students and staff self-screen at home.

Q: Will COVID vaccinations be required for staff and students?

A: At this time, PUSD cannot require staff or students to be vaccinated for COVID.

Q: What will the day look like?

A: Students will be returning to familiar classroom experiences, structures and routines. At the elementary level students will experience a recess break on the playground with peers and a lunch and recess at the lunch tables and have access to sports and equipment on the playground. At the secondary level students will have passing periods and lunch.

The grading periods would also remain the same as well. At the elementary we will continue with trimesters and at the secondary trimesters and quarters will continue depending on which school your child attends.

Q: What will the elementary bell schedule be? Will there be time banking days?

A: At elementary, the school day will return to the pre COVID bell schedule. If the elementary school had a timebank day, that schedule would resume. For example: Schools that start at 9:00 would dismiss at 3:10 and on their timebank days their hours would be 9:00-1:20. We do have a couple sites that do not have timebank days. A sample school schedule for a non-timebanking day may be 7:45-1:45.

Q: Will there be regular lunch? Recess?

A: Yes, although schedules may be staggered to reduce the number of students at lunch and recess at the same time.

Q: Will playground equipment and lunch tables be disinfected between recess?

A: Yes, our custodians will continue to clean high-touch services such as playground equipment, lunch tables, stair railings, door handles, etc.

Q: Will X-Ploration return to elementary schools?

A: Yes, we know our students missed the STEM, arts, music, and P.E. that X-ploration provided. We will continue X-Ploration at all elementary schools.

Q: What will ESS hours be?

A: Pre-COVID ESS hours, before and after school, will return.

Q: Will there still be a required quarantine for close contacts?

A: Schools will continue to follow the latest CDPH Guidelines for Covid positive individuals, contact tracing, and quarantining. They can be found [here](#).

Q: Will there be options to go virtual for the time in quarantine?

A: Yes, classes may have to switch to virtual learning temporarily if quarantining. Or, if an individual student has to miss class, they may be assigned asynchronous work.

Q: Will parents be allowed on campus during drop off/ pick up times?

A: At this time, no. parents will not be allowed onto campus during drop off/pick up.

Q: Will volunteers/visitors be allowed onto campuses?

A: We look forward to allowing parent volunteers back on campus, but they are currently not allowed. If this changes, we will let families know.

Q: Worst case scenario - what will happen to in-person learning if the COVID situation worsens?

A: In the event of a surge in COVID cases locally, or a change in public health orders, a temporary shift to virtual learning may be an option.

Connect Academy (K-8th Virtual Learning option)

Q: How is Connect Academy different from an on-campus experience?

A: Connect Academy is PUSD's virtual learning option for the 2021-22 school year and future school years. The student's learning at Connect Academy will be equivalent in both quality and quantity to traditional classroom instruction. The main difference is that Connect Academy students are receiving instruction virtually, part of a separate school, and will have increased flexibility, personalization, and access to integrated computer science and digital arts curriculum.

Q: Why isn't PUSD maintaining a fully virtual option tied to my school of residence like

this school year?

A: Trying to split our schools into in-person and virtual is a significant challenge to our resources and teachers. Connect Academy allows us to specialize and meet the needs of families who want virtual learning to continue, and allow our on-campus staff to focus on the needs of in-person learners.

Q: Is this a separate school or tied to my child's current school of residence?

A: Connect Academy will operate as its own school. We've had many requests to continue virtual learning from families who have found success in a virtual learning environment. This school is designed to meet the needs of families who seek a full-time virtual option.

Q: Will the virtual teacher in Connect Academy be from my child's school of residence?

A: While all teachers will be PUSD teachers, they will not necessarily be from your child's current school. They will be from all over the District, and tied specifically to Connect Academy, which will be a separate school.

Q: Will Connect Academy have the same hours as in-person learning? What is a day like at Connect Academy?

A: While the daily schedule is still being created, the learning day will include daily live instruction from teachers, blending together elements of in-person and virtual learning. Students will learn through asynchronous lessons and offline activities as well. In order to allow for both online and offline learning at Connect Academy, students will be provided non-digital opportunities each day as well. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to collaborate with their peers and teachers through optional on-campus experiences.

Q: Will there be any on-campus component to Connect Academy?

A: Yes, part of the design is to have optional opportunities for students to come on campus for collaboration with other students and their teachers.

Q: Where and how often will Connect Academy students meet on-campus?

A: While a location is still to be determined, in-person opportunities (weekly), may include:

- SEL/community building
- Collaborative group work
- Science labs
- Tutorial/office hours
- Electives

Q: Will Connect Academy students have access to electives such as band or choir?

A: The ability to staff classes and provide electives such as band or choir will be determined by enrollment and interest.

Q: Will Connect Academy students have P.E.?

A: Yes, with opportunities for live, teacher-led workouts or recorded sessions.

Q: What type of student is a good fit for Connect Academy?

A: Self-motivated, independent learners who enjoy flexibility in their learning, thrive in the virtual learning environment, have a collaborative mindset, and want to part of a new learning community in PUSD.

Q: What will the class sizes be at Connect Academy?

A: Our virtual classroom sizes will likely be similar to in-person learning classrooms.

Q: Is Connect Academy a temporary or long-term learning option for PUSD?

A: This will be PUSD's newest school. PUSD is investing in Connect Academy as a long-term option that will continue and expand in PUSD for future years. We are very excited to be able to offer a virtual school moving forward.

Q: Who will be teaching - is this a separate company you're contracting with?

A: No, this is a PUSD-run school, and students will be taught PUSD curriculum by PUSD teachers.

Q: Will the Connect Academy teachers receive extra training?

A: Yes, the staff will be comprised of highly qualified PUSD teachers who have received extensive professional development related to virtual teaching and who teach specifically at Connect Academy.

Q: What is the computer science/digital arts focus?

A: Students will have the opportunity to explore coding, computational thinking, digital photography, graphic design, video production and more. These topics will be integrated into curriculum starting as early as kindergarten. For example coding might be integrated with digital storytelling for K-2nd graders. Digital arts might be used to show students how to show their learning through photography and videos. Digital citizenship is built into all curriculum.

Q: Why is there no Connect Academy or virtual learning option for high school students?

A: Due to the importance of keeping many high school students connected to their existing sports teams, clubs, and extracurricular activities, the virtual learning option for high school students will be Poway Virtual Courses (see description below).

Q: Can my child return to his/her school of residence after attending Connect Academy for the 2021-22 school year?

A: Yes, families will have the option to return to their school of residence for the 2022-23 school year.

Poway Virtual Courses (9-12th grades)

Poway Virtual courses are available to high school students in Poway Unified School District and are offered in a variety of subject areas. (*Note: Middle school students are also able to take some of these courses for advanced math; while this would go on their transcript, the course would not count toward their high school credits.) Poway Virtual Courses are offered in

addition to students' in-person, on-campus learning or independent study schedules.

Q: Is PVC a fully virtual option for high school students?

A: Poway Virtual Courses (PVC) are taken in conjunction with a students' on-campus or independent study schedule. In other words, students would be opting to take a course or courses through PVC along with their existing schedules.

Q: Is it possible to combine and blend options to be fully virtual? For example, New Directions and PVC? Or combine with my high school courses for a hybrid experience?

A: Yes. Families can create a full distance learning environment for high school students by combining independent study (New Directions) and PVC. Families interested in creating a full distance learning schedule for their high school student should work with the student's school site counselor and/or the Alternative Programs counselor.

Q: How does my high school student sign up for PVC courses, since CRFs were already turned in?

A: Ordinarily, students would select to take courses through PVC during the Course Request Form (CRF) process at their school site, just as they select other high school course work. However, since many students have already completed the CRF process, if a student now wants to select to take a class through PVC, the student should fill out a Google form that their school will be sending out by Friday, April 23, to request a change to the CRF.

Q: Are PVC courses taught live or are they asynchronous?

A: Instruction in PVC courses is delivered asynchronously through Canvas. The courses have common start and end dates and regular due dates for assignments and projects. Some courses require weekly in-person meetings such as labs for science and CTE courses, as well as in-person tutorial and office hours.

Q: What are the courses being offered through PVC?

A: This is a list of the courses we plan to offer through PVC next school year. All courses meet PUSD graduation and/or college entrance and NCAA eligibility requirements. We're continuing to expand and grow the list of course offerings.

- American Literature 1, 2
- Automotive Technology 1, 2
- Biology 1, 2
- Chemistry 1, 2
- Civics
- Economics
- Economics of Business Ownership
- English 1, 2 and 3, 4
- Health
- Integrated Math 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B
- Introduction to Business
- Freshman PE, Advanced PE
- Spanish 1, 2 and 3, 4
- US History 1, 2
- World History 1, 2

Q: Can my high schooler take PVC courses and still participate in on-campus school activities such as clubs, sports and performing arts?

A: Yes, students remain attached to their school of residence, and thus, can participate in on-campus activities.

Q: Is PVC a choice for the entire school year, or trimester by trimester?

A: Since PVC offerings are online courses that students take in addition to their on-campus or independent student classes, students choose courses trimester by trimester. Students can request to take courses through PVC in one, two or three trimesters. Students who attend quarter system schools are also able to take PVC courses, but they follow a trimester schedule.

Q: Will PVC courses offer any AP courses?

A: Currently, PVC is not offering any AP courses, though there are some in development for future years. A student wishing to take AP courses and PVC would be encouraged to take the AP course at their school site and choose from among the available PVC offerings for another of their courses.

Q: Can I take PVC courses on top of a full course load to advance or catch up?

A: Yes. This is possible on a space-available basis. Typically, students take courses through PVC as part of their full course load. However, if there is space available, students may take an additional course through PVC in order to advance or catch up.

Poway Home Education Program (TK-8th grades)

Poway Home Education Program, or PHEP, is designed to guide parents who wish to teach their students at home. PUSD provides this support for students TK (transitional Kindergarten) through eighth grade. For our homeschool families, we are able to provide curriculum, materials, and instructional assistance. To ensure the success of our PHEP students, families are assigned to a PUSD PHEP teacher who will meet once a week to distribute materials, review student work, and support parent instruction. More information on PHEP can be found [here](#).

Q: What is the difference between Poway Home Education Program and Independent Study?

A: There are several key differences between the Poway Home Education Program (PHEP) and New Directions, our independent study program. One primary difference is who leads student learning: In PHEP, the instruction is delivered by a family member or other responsible adult. In New Directions, the student acts as an independent learner. Another difference is the grade range: PHEP serves TK - 8th grade students and New Directions serves students in grades 6-12. Both programs involve weekly meetings with a highly qualified PUSD teacher and both use PUSD adopted curricula. In PHEP, the family member and student attend the weekly meeting. In New Directions, it is the student who attends meetings with the teacher.

Q: Is there a cap to how many families you'll be accepting into the program?

A: We ask that all families indicate that they are selecting PHEP during the online registration process. We will strive to accommodate all interested families.

Q: Will there be in-person meetups or social connection opportunities with other homeschool families?

A: Yes, Periodically, PHEP will hold small group sessions for those families who want social interactions with peers.

Q: What does a typical homeschool day look like?

A: Student instructional time is driven by whatever schedule works best for the family to meet the completion due dates. Families are welcome to customize content while meeting standards assigned. There is a heavy emphasis on English Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, Science and Physical Education with optional lessons in arts and music.

“PHEP” family experience includes attending a regular weekly meeting with their designated PHEP teacher. In this meeting, families will review work from the prior week and receive feedback. They will then be given the necessary supports and materials for the upcoming week(s). The family will work together at times that best meet their families needs to complete and assess the materials assigned, in preparation for the next scheduled meeting. Parents will also have access to a variety of optional work to meet their students’ personal needs. With the joint effort of the PHEP teacher, families may customize the content of the assignments to best meet the interests of their student.

Q: I’ve never homeschooled before. What supports will there be for parents who are homeschooling?

PHEP will hold optional “Teachers Teaching Parents” sessions to help parents learn instructional strategies and best practices.

Q: Is this option a good fit for a GATE Identified student? Can the curriculum be individualized for GATE students?

A: Family members are provided with grade-level curriculum. This is the same grade-level curriculum provided at all of our PUSD schools. The PHEP provider (parent, guardian or other responsible adult) will meet with the PHEP teacher along with the student to regularly review and evaluate assignments for each week. In this meeting the team can discuss customizing curriculum to fit the needs and interests of the student. Curriculum and books can be accessed on line or by picking materials up in person. If materials are being accessed on line, it will be through Canvas.

Q: What about families that are traveling? Can the meetings with the teacher be through zoom?

A: Yes, but PHEP families are committing to being:

- Responsible for meeting weekly/regularly with their PHEP teacher and student to review and assess student work and progress
- The primary provider of instruction for their student
- Responsible for ensuring all assignments are turned in/uploaded **weekly**
- Required to grade/assess and date all completed assignments
- Submit Trimester Progress Reports that reflect student learning along with their assigned PHEP teacher

Q: Can my child return to their school of residence if PHEP is not working out for us?

A: Students enrolled in the Poway Home Education Program (PHEP) will remain registered at their current school of attendance. A family may choose to have their child return to the current school of attendance at the grading period, provided there is space available. If space is not available, the student may not be able to return to the school of attendance until the following school year. Should this be the case, the child may be placed at another school site until either space becomes available at the child’s current school of attendance or, at the latest, the following school year. All Poway Home Education Program students will have the opportunity to return to their school of attendance if they choose during the 2022-2023 school year.

New Directions Independent Study (6-12th grades)

New Directions was first created to allow high-performing athlete/actors the opportunity to engage in those areas during the day and do their school work when it best fit their schedules. As time has progressed, the need for student flexibility has steadily increased and New Directions has become the perfect fit for a growing number of students. This has resulted in the significant expansion of New Directions and other alternative programs. These new and growing opportunities allow all students to build the learning environment that best suits their academic and social/emotional needs. More information on New Directions for prospective students and families, including course offerings, can be found [here](#).

Q: What curriculum is used?

A: New Directions uses the same curriculum that all PUSD schools use. Project-based learning is a key aspect of the program. This means that students will have opportunities to choose real-world and meaningful projects that meet course objectives and standards.

Q: What kind of student or learner would this option be a good fit for?

A: Students who are independent learners with good reading comprehension are the best fit for this program, but all types of learners have been successful.

Q: Who is doing the teaching? What is the parent role?

A: In New Directions, the PUSD teacher does the teaching. Students meet one-on-one with their teacher for instruction and/or assessment once or twice a week. The parent's main role is to make sure students have a quiet place to work and that they get their work completed on time.

Q: How many classes will a student take each semester in this learning option?

A: A minimum of 6 classes per semester is required at New Directions. Classes are taken one at a time on a four week schedule plus a week for the final. Each week's study guide takes approximately 20 hours to complete and must be turned in on time. Students should spend approximately 4-6 hours a day, 5 days a week, working on their assignments. If a student has continued difficulty meeting deadlines, he or she may be counseled toward a different learning option.

Q: Can the student meet with the teacher once a week via zoom instead of in-person?

A: For the 2021-2022 School year, students will have the option of meeting with their teacher remotely or in person.

Q: What do the in-person options look like? How often? How many students in the setting?

A: Middle school students meet approximately 2 days a week. They meet with their appointment teacher in small groups 2-3 for an hour and then they will have a small group meeting with either their math or writing specialist. These groups tend to be a little larger and are in a larger setting. The second day, the students meet with whichever specialty teacher they didn't meet with on their first meeting day.

High School meets once a week, 1:1 with their appointment teacher and only meets again if they are taking math or science through New Directions. Math and Science class will have between 4-12 students attending at a time in a larger, classroom setting.