

COVID-19 Operations Written Report

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Name	Contact Name and Title	Email and Phone	Date of Adoption
Almond Acres Charter Academy (AACA)	Eileen Higgins, Support Services Director	ehiggins@aacacademy.com (805)467-2095	June 18, 2020

Descriptions provided should include sufficient detail yet be sufficiently succinct to promote a broader understanding of the changes your LEA has put in place. LEAs are strongly encouraged to provide descriptions that do not exceed 300 words.

Provide an overview explaining the changes to program offerings that the LEA has made in response to school closures to address the COVID-19 emergency and the major impacts of the closures on students and families.

AACA provided traditional in-seat instruction for Kindergarten through 7th grade for the first two trimesters of the 2019-2020 school year. AACA implemented an online distance learning model due to the COVID-19 closure. Families access education in their homes via online resources. Many of the core instructional materials/elements were maintained (Big Ideas Math, Studies Weekly, Step Up To Writing, core literature, and project based learning) while in the distance learning model. Many of those programs have digital resources that are accessible. While AACA was in the traditional school setting, all students participated in a daily shared start assembly, daily physical education, weekly art classes, and clubs. These were taken and moved to a virtual model. Shared start is now a YouTube video presented each morning. Students are provided with daily physical activity lessons from the PE teacher and are expected to log activity. Online art lessons are provided as enrichment opportunities in every grade level. Several clubs are meeting via zoom with their staff advisor. Important school events such as Maker’s Faire, Talent Show, and Read Run Relay fundraiser were moved online as well.

AACA utilized daily communication to families through a finite number of digital platforms. As a primary parent communication tool, AACA used Parent Square. All classes used Google Classroom alongside YouTube and FlipGrid.

These changes have been met with support from our families but implementation challenges persist. Many parents are working from their homes while their children are trying to access school work. This has caused frustration and strife within some families. Some parents do not feel skilled enough to support their student’s learning. In response, administration clarified that instruction needs to be delivered but engagement and task completion may need to look different for different students. Communication between the school and parents has increased to allow for individualized needs. Grading and progress monitoring has been altered to allow for the variations of support different students have at home.

Provide a description of how the LEA is meeting the needs of its English learners, foster youth and low-income students.

AACA is providing multiple levels of support based on strategic planning, as well as numerous surveys provided to our families. All teachers are required to produce daily instructional videos and are using SDAIE strategies within those videos. We have refined our distance learning

model so that teachers are holding small group instruction and those groupings are organized by student needs. This is providing the necessary instruction to support the needs of all three subgroups. Additionally, teachers are holding daily morning meetings and office hours to address a lack of available support in the home. To support the continued development of speaking and listening skills, teachers are using FlipGrid tasks daily with ELD students.

All three groups have been provided devices and access to necessary technology based on information gathered in the initial technology survey. A bilingual paraeducator delivered the survey orally to our English learner families to ensure accuracy. Additionally, these students have zoom meetings multiple times a week with a bi-lingual paraeducator to assist with curriculum delivery, work completion, technology needs, and clarification. A family approach was used so multiple students receive support with each of these check-ins.

To assist these subgroups, the technology teacher provides online training using screen capture to demonstrate how to access necessary platforms, submit work, and check on assignment status. That teacher has also developed an online inventory of support and training videos for families to access. This assistance was determined necessary after an examination of the needs of these groups. Additionally, intervention programs designated for these subgroups, such as ST Math and Read Naturally, are continuing during distance learning.

Our foster youth are receiving daily check ins for social emotional support and our few homeless students are being given gift cards to assist with supplies necessary at home.

Provide a description of the steps that have been taken by the LEA to continue delivering high-quality distance learning opportunities.

AACA utilized a three stage approach to move to a distance learning model:

- 1) Full closure lasting for 9 school days. During this time, staff were preparing for distance learning by participating in professional development on technology, surveying family/staff for technology needs, lesson planning, and distributing necessary materials and supplies. No instruction was delivered however voluntary online enrichment activities were provided through Parent Square. Administration and teachers provided daily communication to the families regarding the school closure and the plans for distance learning.
- 2) Launch of distance learning for 8 instructional days prior to Spring Break. An instructional model was created for Kindergarten through 7th grade with consistent expectations for instruction and allotted work time. These two weeks were focused on engaging students and acquainting them and their families with the online platforms. Schedules for online meetings were made and adjusted to work with family needs. Teachers provided daily ELA and Math lessons via YouTube (or similar) videos with independent work as support.
- 3) After Spring Break through the end of the year the instructional model was continued and refined based on implementation and feedback. This consists of daily instruction with frequent review and revisions of the effectiveness of the model. This is done through family surveys, parent phone calls, and staff meetings. Video instruction, class meetings (both whole group and small group as necessary to address intervention needs), and independent work is offered each day. Grading policies and assessment practices were also put into place. Weekly PLC are held to allow for these revisions, sharing best practices, and provide additional support with instructional technologies.

Provide a description of the steps that have been taken by the LEA to provide school meals while maintaining social distancing practices.

School meals are being distributed daily across the region at multiple sites. Any student from any school is able to access free meals at any of these locations. This is being coordinated as a joint effort between all districts within San Luis Obispo County. AACAA shares a campus with Lillian Larson Elementary School in the San Miguel Joint Unified School District and it is one of the meal distribution points. Lillian Larson staff are using the pick up zone in the parking lot to hand out meals. Families walk or drive up and are handed the meals by staff who are gloved and masked. Should a walk up line form, they are spaced out by 6 foot divisions to maintain social distancing. Staff stand 6 feet or more apart and have specific duties so they are not moving close to one another.

Provide a description of the steps that have been taken by the LEA to arrange for supervision of students during ordinary school hours.

Almond Acres Charter Academy, along with all the LEAs in San Luis Obispo, formed a partnership with local government agencies, Cuesta College, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education to provide childcare supervision. Specific childcare locations were determined following a survey of stakeholders, and potential participants, resulting in childcare centers being strategically placed in the north and south areas of the county. Programming support was provided through community partners that included Champions Childcare and the SLO YMCA.

Childcare was provided from 7:00am-6:00pm daily for families who complete online registration forms. The children of first responders, health care staff, and essential service workers were given priority enrollment. Children beginning at age three were eligible for services. Activities included support with distance learning assignments, language instruction, social development, outdoor education, athletics, movement, dance, and dramatic play. Nutrition was provided by various partner agencies.

Data indicated that families requesting childcare services have had them provided.