

# HIGHLIGHTS OF A MEMORABLE AND EXTRAORDINARY SCHOOL YEAR



# 2020-2021



## LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

**W**e completed the school year, and we did it together. Thank you! What a year this has been! Among challenges, determination and resilience, the community united to support our students with their learning goals every day.

The talent, innovation and creativity of our staff provided answers when it mattered the most. Through Distance Learning, teachers and educators reached students at home and created the best environment possible to keep advancing our students' academic skills.

At the same time, our team generated opportunities to connect with students and families by providing emotional support resources, activities and services.

As it was clear that the need to access resources and services kept growing, Emery Unified School District established a meals distribution system that became crucial for many of our families, designed a COVID-19 testing program for staff members, and informed the community about programs available in times of crisis. We are proud of what we accomplished and would like to share some bright spots with you as highlighted in the newsletter.

We remain stronger together!

We look forward to returning to school, in-person for the 2021-2022 school year. Our staff eagerly looks forward to welcoming our students back to a full five-day school week. We will adhere to the health and safety measures, and we will communicate updates before the start of the next school year.

The staff will return to school on Monday, August 16, 2021, and our students will return on Thursday, August 19, 2021.

Have an outstanding summer break!

Sincerely,

*Dr. Quiauna Scott*  
Superintendent



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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# INNOVATION TO ADVANCE THE ACADEMICS AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Educators provided extraordinary learning tools and opportunities so students could continue advancing towards their academic goals. Over a screen, with daily dedication and commitment, the classes went on. **Maryam Adalat, Principal, 6th–8th Anna Yates Middle School**, pointed out that while facing the pandemic, teachers have been using creative tools to support students with an incredible work and level of engagement and effort.

Educators are focusing on social-emotional learning and mindfulness. They have partnered with **Alameda County Crisis Support Services** to promote workshops related to mental health, including suicide prevention. Educators have worked with **Kaiser** and explored ways for kids to socialize in these challenging times. One of the programs created at Anna Yates is called **“Reading with Relevance,”** a reading program with a social justice approach.

The **“Zoom Break Outs”** encouraged peer engagement with movies and music environments. At the same time, tutoring, in-person art classes and after school programs proved beneficial for students.



## TECH DEVICES AND HOTSPOTS PROVIDED TO STUDENTS

Technology support has been critical to helping our students with Distance Learning this past year. **Will Fuentes**, along with **George Somers** and **Elliot Lawson**, organized the distribution of iPads for students from TK to 1st grade, and Chromebooks for 2nd to 12th graders. We thank them for their outstanding efforts!

This school year, the IT team grew to include a 3rd technician, who was in charge of a support phone line to help students and families. This resource has been in high demand.

At the same time, every student with internet connectivity issues was assigned a hotspot. All these efforts were met with success.

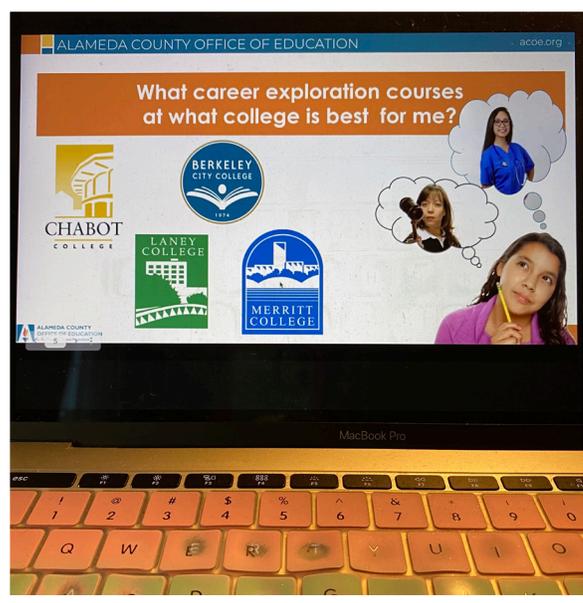
Thanks to a Verizon grant, the District offered a Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality class, taught by **George Somers**. This program was fun and provided an extra enrichment opportunity for our students.

## SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY

Precisely, **Samantha Carter, Principal, TK–5th Anna Yates Elementary School**, expressed how crucial it was for schools to maintain a spirit of community through events that reunited them at times of difficult isolation. The harvest pumpkin patch event on campus was a blast, and a wonderful opportunity to meet again. Having only looked at each other through a screen, the egg hunt meant that students saw each other after a long time, and they were grateful for each happy encounter. The words **“I missed you”** were heard all over the place. The **movie night** also proved so successful!

Anna Yates Elementary School created a **five-week series of in-person programs** in the afternoon, with classes dedicated to dancing, swim lessons and other meaningful experiences, while also providing on-line instruction.

Virtually, they had access to the **Oakland Ballet**. Dancing keeps people connected!



## CREATING A PATH TO SUCCESS

Principal Scuggs Smith and Ms. Caitlin James, formed the “College and Career Readiness Committee,” which highlighted opportunities with CTE, the Career Technical Education program, to learn about the options available, and determine students’ interests with participation in a virtual career fair. Another important event to promote higher education was held for the first time: The “Bridge to Career Success Family Night.”

Lessons to learn sign language became a significant part of the initiatives established this school year at Emery High, while the **Emery Spartan Book Club** for students and staff also shined with enthusiasm, being created just a few months ago. The second annual **Civics Night** attracted attention as well, dedicated to address issues in the community, with presentations and ideas to make improvements. Overall, adaptability and reimagining have been pillars in the strategies to move ahead in this school year.

## ADAPTING AND CELEBRATING EDUCATION

The efforts were plenty. Eddie Scuggs Smith, Principal at Emery High, explained that educators were able to adapt, support and celebrate learning.

The initial challenge was learning how to utilize technology to unite students, parents and teachers to work together to make the transition to distance learning and have the best possible experience. As they transitioned from the first semester to the second semester, they all celebrated at the “Academic Rally,” an event that recognized not only excellence in academic achievements, but also focused on the students being resilient and making improvements while participating in virtual classes: Math, History, English, Science, Art, Physics, Spanish and Music. Being positive, purposeful and productive, Emery High School came together for the online event, and even printed special t-shirts celebrating the occasion.



## MEALS DISTRIBUTION: WORKING TOGETHER

Schools at EUSD played a very relevant role for the students, families and everyone in the community who was in need of meals. Students received food during their daily schedule, and the Alameda Food Bank joined the efforts by providing grocery bags at the distribution sites. “Food distribution resources were available to the community in person or by car with masks and social distancing protocols enforced,” explained Marcia Pharman, Food Service Supervisor.

At the same time, Chef Joan Gallagher, with “Nourish You Community Kitchen,” contributed to the initiative with delicious meals that were highly sought after by the community.

Families have been very grateful. We have seen tears of joy and relief, as families who have faced huge financial challenges this year came to pick up meals. The meals have made a huge difference especially for families who have lost jobs due to the pandemic.

*(continued on page 4)*

## HOUSING AND CLOTHING SUPPORT

As families struggled to make ends meet, the district connected them with housing assistance and clothing resources. The programs included city, state and federal agencies. Even when families had moved to other cities, EUSD guided them towards services that could benefit them.



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### MEALS DISTRIBUTION: WORKING TOGETHER *(continued from page 3)*

The food service program also provided meals to families for Thanksgiving and Christmas. During these two holidays, we partnered with Safe Passages and were able to feed an additional 100 families for Thanksgiving, 100 families for Christmas, and provided \$15 Target gift cards purchased with donations we received.

The grocery bags from the Alameda County Food Bank included dried and canned food, but with Safe Passages as a partner, we were able to provide eggs and meat products such as chicken and beef. We also had a special food giveaway this past Easter. We were able to provide an additional 100 meals to our families who participated in Easter Egg Hunt.

The total number of meals given to EUSD families and community members from March 2020 until April 2021: **128,361**.

A big thank you to our staff, **Estella Harvey and Loan Nguyen**. We are grateful for **Joan Gallagher**, owner of **Nourish You Catering** and **Randal Hamati** of **Safe Passages (AmeriCorps)**. **Together, we did it!**

### COUNSELING FOR STUDENTS PROVIDED BY EUSD

The district offers counseling to students with online support. This free service of telehealth is still available, informed **Kevin W. Edwards, LCSW, Behavioral Health Manager** at EUSD. To learn more about counseling services, please send an email to [kevin.w.edwards@emeryusd.org](mailto:kevin.w.edwards@emeryusd.org)

### COVID-19 TESTING PROGRAM FOR DISTRICT'S STAFF

EUSD implemented a program to provide members of the staff the option of in-home COVID-19 testing. Staff members can mail a saliva sample to a lab and receive results to make sure they are healthy. This service is still occurring. The district also has in-person testing sessions on campus.