

# News and Updates From Meher Montessori Plus A Message From Adela Muñoz Meher Montessori School Director

April 22, 2020

Dear Meher Parents and Students,



**W**e hope that you are all safe, well and happy during this time of change. We are anxious, as are you, to return to a more normal way of living where our movements and activities are first less and then finally unrestricted. We very much want to go back to our regular school activities and will inform you as soon as we get information from our county, state and federal authorities that give us the ability to resume school.

We are envisioning what a return to school may look like and are making various plans to keep our students and

parents safe, educated and happy.

I have a lot to bring to you from our teachers and other staff members, but first I would like to share with you all a message that I gave to all of Mr. Mindes' Elementary students in an email a week ago. The following is information that is suited to more than just his students:

*"Hello everyone. I pray that you are all doing well. I sure do miss you guys. I miss your conversations, your laughs and your smiling faces. I have my good days and my not so good days. I'm keeping busy here at home with gardening, projects, cooking, exercising and helping take care of my grandsons (they live with us).*

*I hope you all found some ways to be helpful this last week and a half. Right now our home team is the most important team we have and we all have to take care of each other.*

*Did you complete any of my challenges? I completed two drawings and a Haiku. Here is my Haiku:*

*I miss the ocean  
The sound of the waves calms me  
I will be back soon*

*Please send me your drawings and Haiku as soon as possible. I can't wait to see them and I would really like to share them on our Instagram. And if you have any other activities that you would like to share, please send me pictures.*

*Make sure you are completing your work sent by Mr. Mindes. If you have any questions send him an email. He is there to help. Also, make sure you read, read, read every day.*

*There are also some great organizations that you can go online and visit. The West San Gabriel Valley Boys and Girls Club located in Monterey Park have a great Instagram with lots of great ideas and a Daily Wellness Tip with Nick. I also follow Roots and Shoots. It is a youth program of the Jane Goodall Institute. She is one of my heroes. If you love animals and care about animal conservation, get to know Dr. Goodall. She is amazing.*

*This week I would like for you to answer some questions about yourself. Really think about your answers. Dig deep and give thoughtful answers. I will do the same. Here are the questions.*

- 1. 1 thing I love about myself*
- 2. 2 fun things about me*
- 3. 3 ways I show kindness to others*
- 4. 4 positive qualities I have*
- 5. 5 things I did well this week*

*I love you all. Looking forward to hearing from each one of you.  
Mrs. Muñoz”*



**M**rs. Page has been taking care of the many plants and garden at Meher Monterey Park as well as the animals who reside in the classrooms. Here is her report.

*“While the School is closed, I have been watering and tending the Lower Elementary gardens, which look beautiful! The grapevines have been growing especially quickly, and there are many little clusters of grapes beginning. The sunflowers are loving this time*

*and growing quickly as well. Taking care of the classroom plants, I have given them fertilizer to make them shine and added new plants and pots.*



*Rosie, the Bearded Dragon in Ms. Tenold's room, has now laid 4 eggs (infertile), and is almost finished molting. She is being taken care of at home by Mrs. Page (see photo) so she can have daily interaction. The Turtles have been eating well and are swimming with their little fish friends. The fish in Mrs. Rivera's class are also happy.*

*The Library is getting a new map and shelf labels to make books easier to find. Some sorting is happening: sending away books that aren't being read, and putting newer interests in their place. The Library is kept vibrant this way, and relevant to our students' interests and research."*



**M**r. Mindes has been active with his students by sending out various homework and research projects. Some of these would be interesting for children of various ages. These are his last two emails:

*Dear parents,*

*Hope everybody is safe and well! I am attaching a .pdf file, [Composition of the Earth](#) Homework with instructions for the students. While this assignment is for all students, each will work on it, and complete it, in a manner that matches their current stage of development.*

*After reading the assignment, you will see that I would like them to submit three summaries for the three different Youtube videos I assigned to watch. I believe the last two videos in particular will be a challenge for all students to summarize and will require a lot of pausing and replaying the video along with your help and encouragement.*

*I did not give a due date; although, a date might add some structure for the students. I would suggest anywhere from one to three weeks, working approximately 30 minutes a day. If there are any questions please email or text. Thanks.*

*Mr. Mindes*

*P.S. I was wondering about student progress on the math assignments, daily reading, and summary writing. If you are able, please email me and let me know. Thanks, again.*

And a subsequent email went out about Common Core Mathematics Practice Test for 5th Grade:

Hello Parents,

Here is a link for the Common Core Practice Tests: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/practicetest.asp>

I would like the students to do the 5th grade math test. It is somewhat challenging, so please feel free to give the students hints if they have and questions; you can also email me with any questions. The following topics (among others) are found in the questions

- \* Fractions (including mixed numbers) - adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing.
- \* Finding the volume of rectangular prisms.
- \* Finding the area
- \* Decimals (determining less than and greater than)
- \* Place value in the decimal system
- \* Inches in a foot; also fractions of a foot, i.e. 3 inches is .25 feet, or 1/4 of a foot
- \* Cups in a quart

**Instructions to navigate once you are on the page**

1. Underneath the box that says Take the Practice Test ... click: **California Smarter Balanced Practice Test Portal**
2. Click: **Student Interface Practice and Training Tests** (I believe it is the green box on the right)
2. You will sign in as a guest ... **click the sign in button at the bottom of the page.**
3. **Choose grade 5** in the select grade drop down box.
4. The first set of boxes (**in pink**) choose the **math practice test underneath the ELA practice test.**

Please email if there are any questions about navigating to the test. Also, I am giving the link to an [answer key](#), but it can be found on the site as well.



**A** report from Ms. Tenold:

The class was all invited to a birthday call for one of our classmates (Jordan), a first year student. I heard there is a farm where you can invite a goat to join you on your Zoom call, and I considered this for the class call for a couple of minutes until I realized they expected

*a donation of 100 dollars! On Easter, I sent each child a personalized note using a digital card app I found called Canva. I picked out a different background and design for each and wrote something encouraging and loving to each student, and sent it to their parents by email.*

*I've let the 3rd year pet care group know about the exciting news of Rosie having eggs, shown them the photos, and given them some information to read on how that could be possible for her to have eggs without a mate! I have sent individual ideas to parents based on what I know their child likes, such as suggesting that a couple of my girls watch the brand new documentary on soul surfer Bethany Hamilton, someone they did a report on this year and a project that was worked on for months and months.*

*I gave Melissa's mom a great infographic and article on none other than the coronavirus! because her daughter is fascinated by all things medical and specifically infectious diseases and pandemics.*

*I have sent some parents a little list of the main learning objectives for their child's grade level. This was also provided to all parents several times throughout the year, but parents want to be reminded that yup, adding and subtracting are still meant for your 2nd grader! :) You can feel comfortable!*

### **Mrs. Muñoz Continues:**

- Our Primary teachers, Mrs. Rivera and Ms. Lopez have continued sending out videos to their students and Ms. Wildhaber, director of our Altadena Campus highly recommends [pbskids.org](https://pbskids.org).
- The United States affiliate of the Association Montessori International has a [great section on their website](#) filled with dozens and dozens of helpful links for parents, children and educators regarding activities to do for home education during this Covid-19 period.
- Apple has a huge section of free and low cost apps for iPhone and iPad on their app store. It is custom tailored for home educational activities. Similar apps are available for android as well.

I will be sending out regular updates in regards to the reopening of Meher and other important Meher news, including summaries of work assignments and educational activities for our students.

Peace and love to you all.  
Adela Muñoz





**A** Final Message From John F. Page, Meher Montessori School's Founder and Executive Director

During a difficult time such as we find ourselves in, parents may wonder how their children will fare in Montessori as they hear that some public school teachers are doing classes using Zoom or other “distance learning” tools. It is true that although the Montessori Method is quite adaptable to all cultures and societies, generally speaking

Montessori does not lend itself so easily to a remote learning model.

Why not? The Montessori Method began with years of research and observation by Dr. Montessori and others. Their research showed, and a hundred years of subsequent implementation has reinforced the fact that young children, especially those in the developmental group of 2 ½ - 6 years of age are largely sensorial learners and must have their hands on teaching materials...real materials...not abstractions such as chalkboard drawings, pictures in a book, television screens or other two-dimensional objects.

This is not to say that those have no utility, but children are primarily “hands on” learners. Even in the elementary classroom, while the children are gradually learning through more abstract ideas, a great many of the materials are “concrete-izations” of more abstract ideas. The Puzzle Maps of the Primary Level give way to paper maps of the continents and world. The three dimensional Trinomial Cube which illustrates the trinomial theorem, the various materials that demonstrate square and cube root, decanomials, etc - all start out concretely and then work towards abstraction so that when the child is doing complex mathematical problems there is a deep understanding of what it means...not just writing on a chalkboard. This just can not be accomplished with remote learning.

So, is there no room for Zoom or other remote learning platforms for Montessori Elementary? Certainly there is room. Creativity will always find ways to instruct and learn.

Most of the public schools in Southern California are indeed shut down through this coming summer. And the online education that is taking place is usually not being evaluated too seriously. For example, the superintendent of schools for the Irvine Unified School District indicated that the majority of their students come from well educated parents and they have no real idea of who is doing the homework or other projects. Therefore all students merely get a pass or fail grade.

Because Montessori education is not “block based” or rigidly “grade based” we are always able to pick up with each child individually and adjust their “custom-tailored” program based upon individual current development and interests.

Additionally the Montessori Model is one, in elementary especially, of spontaneous collaborative learning. Only a small percentage of it takes place with the teacher in front of the class with all the children focused at one time on the teacher. That is the sort of learning model that is especially conducive to a remote learning model, as offered through Zoom.

**Children will not and do not “fall behind” in the traditional sense, as there is no one ahead of them! It is similar to when a child enters a class after the school year has begun. The child is not “behind” the others academically as each of the children in the classroom is in a different place developmentally and academically.**

We do wish that this worldwide pandemic hadn't taken place and certainly things would be much smoother had it not. However, we plan to restart and aggressively resume classes as soon as we legally can.

