



ALL DISTRICT MEMO

TO: All District Employees
FROM: Fred James, Acting Executive Director
DATE: September 10, 2020
SUBJECT: District Operations Updates

Great Appreciation for your Flexibility, Responsiveness, and Creativity. I am now 90 days in to my role as Acting Executive Director of the Library District. Every day I am more and more grateful to be working with all of you. Last week, we saw a wave of talent depart from our organization. The pandemic has also resulted in departures due to personal decisions related to health or discomfort with the changing and challenging conditions of working in public service. Despite this wave of retirement and departures, there is vast talent remaining. But we will never return to the world we were managing, organizing, and working in last January.

I appreciate the energy, flexibility, creativity, and responsiveness of those of us who remain and now shape this organization. I am working closely with the Executive Council to maintain an organization that is ready for the future, that serves the public with greater reach and relevance. We have filled many leadership positions with "Acting" directors and managers, in order to give the next Executive Director maximum ability to shape the organization for future library services that meet community needs.

We are also working hard to preserve our jobs, even as our business is at dramatically lower levels than in the past. The gatecount stats for this July are 54% of last year's July count. Circulation is up to 67% of last year's monthly count. Computer lab use is 64% of last year's July count, even with social distancing reducing computer lab capacity.

This tells me our community needs us more than ever. They feel safe. Our hygiene, social distancing, and pandemic protocols are working. Our resources are top of mind for many of our local residents. I believe we are the most responsive public library institution in the nation, with curbside starting in mid-May, buildings opening for limited uses (per Governor Sisolak's directives) in early June, all branches open for full services in late June, and five Vegas Strong Academy sites over the past two weeks, in partnership with the City of Las Vegas. I appreciate the creative courage of our Board of Trustees who have championed these efforts.

None of these initiatives would be successful without realigning existing resources – staff skills and duties, technology, service plans, safety plans, training, courier support, and facilities maintenance – to pivot to the demands of the day. For that I thank each and every one of you. It takes teamwork to be this successful and I am happy to be captain of this team at this time and place.

New Hours to Meet Distance Learning Demand. We have heard from many local college students that they need a place to start school early. We also know from the running dashboard of the Public Education Foundation that, with 92% of the CCSD student body surveyed, there are still 26,461 CCSD students that still need to be tracked down to ensure connectivity; 15,122 CCSD

students have expressed a need for connectivity, and 13,488 CCSD students have expressed need for a device. For these reasons, and to maintain jobs during a period of diminished library activity, we will be opening early student hours in all 13 urban branches starting on Monday, September 14th, giving students the opportunity to access devices and Wifi before public hours in our urban branch facilities, starting at 7:30 a.m. The Branding and Marketing department released the news to local media today, new signs will be displayed outside our buildings announcing the new student hours, and we have placed ads in the *Las Vegas Review Journal* this weekend, to launch this new student (and parent/caregiver) support initiative. Students will be asked to show student i.d.s or other proof of study, and children under 10 will only be admitted with a parent or adult caregiver.

For scheduling purposes, the early hours will track CCSD school day schedules. Early hours will not be available November 25-27 or between December 19, 2020, and January 4, 2021.

We also hope to bring early student hours to Mesquite Library in the near future, since many of the households around that facility and in the community also lack access to Wifi and devices.

Getting Prepared for Digital Program Production. During the pandemic shutdown, many of our staff from youth services, programming and venue services, adult reference, teen tech labs, outreach services, literacy services, gallery services, and social media jumped in to create digital programs at home or in our performing venues. Branding and Marketing launched the new YouTube channel and produced a guide with best practices and some copyright guidelines for creating virtual story times and programs. We understand that virtual programs, whether harvested from free sites on the web, produced in-house, or donated from performers, will be part of our ongoing business as we move into the hybrid world of physical and virtual services.

To that end, we are looking at how to reorganize the virtual program production function in our organization and we are working with a lawyer to lay down more extensive rights contracts, releases, and checklists for moving forward with content related to books, movies, music, beats, and other virtual program production elements. With both these initiatives, our intent is to enhance the production values of the virtual programs we create, while protecting the Library District on all rights issues. This has meant that we have put a temporary halt on new program development. We hope to bring this activity back soon, in a framework of strong legal and production supports.

In the meantime, the Programming and Venue Services team will be enhancing theater production technologies during the present down time, due to small group sizes that are part of the Governor's Road to Recovery Guidelines. We also hope to build on the talent of the Technical and Production Services, Performing Arts Center Coordinators, Programming Specialists, Outreach Services, Literacy Services, Youth Services staff by investing in training, software, and other resources needed to support and sustain virtual program development long-term. Thank you all for your patience as this initiative is set for the next generation of library services that will make the library website and YouTube site platforms for staff, performer, and public talent. We have been inspired by the work at the East Las Vegas Built from Scratch Lab which helped guide the "pop-up" creation of digital programs during the pandemic and which established the training and equipment use protocols (pre-pandemic) for engaging a wide variety of local residents in local podcast, DJ, graphic design, and recording productions.

This is another initiative that seeks to realign existing assets of the Library District for public value and to maintain jobs in a time of decreased use of our theaters and performance venues.

2020 Flu Shots. Due to the continued need to restrict social gatherings because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the District will not host on-site flu shots this year. Instead, the District will reimburse employees up to \$25 for flu shots obtained at an outside provider. The District will also pay up to one hour of Administrative Leave for employees to obtain their shot at an outside provider during

their normal working hours. Please send receipt and check requests to Financial Services attention Lynn Lucuara.

New Element of the Library District's COVID-19 Protocol. The District understands the difficulty our employees may face maintaining appropriate social distancing should one or more of their household members test positive for COVID-19. In light of this, the District will now request that any employee who has a member of their household test positive for COVID-19 remain away from work and follow the procedure under Column B (Same Household) of the District's COVID-19 Exposure Protocol found on the Staff Updates page of our website: <https://lvccld.org/staffupdates>. In continued support of our employees during this difficult time, the District will now pay Administrative Leave to any employee who has a member of their household test positive for COVID-19. These employees will be required to remain away from work for up to 14 days during which time they will be paid for up to 2 weeks of their authorized work hours under the Administrative Leave pay code.

Vote for Art! Take a minute and cast your ballot for LVCCLD Art Galleries in this year's "Best of Las Vegas" now through September 30th. Go to votebo.lv.com and look for "Art Galleries" categories of Things to Do.

Customer Kudos. The best signals I get that we are on the right track are feedback from customers. This week, we heard from a family using the Windmill Library Vegas Strong Academy that their student's experience in the library was better than CCSD! We heard from a former poet laureate of Iowa that our art galleries and the creative spirit of the Library District were inspiring. Partner staff from Vegas Strong Academy express their appreciation to Library District staff who are problem-solving with them daily. I am always appreciative when I hear about staff who are contributing new ideas and energy to the initiatives we are prototyping and refining to stay relevant and loved by locals who need our services more than ever.