



Steve M. Tietjen, Ed.D. | County Superintendent of Schools

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April 1, 2020

Merced County School Communities,

Merced County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steve Tietjen has been working closely with the 20 school district superintendents in monitoring the impact the COVID-19 health crisis has on our students and school communities. The safety of students and staff continues to be a top priority during this unprecedented pandemic. As such, careful consideration has been given in how to best proceed for the remainder of the school year.

Based on the recommendation from Governor Newsom and State Superintendent Tony Thurmond, the Merced County Office of Education, in coordination with the 20 county school districts and the Merced County Department of Public Health, is announcing that the temporary school site closure will extend for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

The school year is not over. It has transitioned from in-person classroom instruction to distance learning. In Merced County, there is no definitive date for when school sites will reopen.

Until the following conditions are met, schools will continue with distance learning:

- The California State Shelter in Place order has been lifted
- The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Merced County has remained constant for a two week period or declined
- The directive to Social Distance has been removed
- The limit placed on social gatherings has been removed

During this timeframe, schools will continue to provide essential services to students, like meals during the regular school schedule. Though the buildings will be closed, education and enrichment activities will continue through extended learning.

Our school leaders and their staff are doing all they can to ensure that learning continues. Our educators are working hard to provide instructional resources for distance learning opportunities for every student they serve.

As children are now at home during the regular school day, we encourage parents and guardians to:

- Create a space in your home dedicated to school work and learning.
- Use a schedule similar to a school schedule that includes time for learning, recess or break, meals and physical activity.
- Be active and help your child with educational activities sent home or online.

For the benefit of public health, we recommend:

- Follow the guidance of public health official and stay at home except to obtain or provide essential services.
- Do not allow students to socialize in person with friends. This includes congregating for sports, games, or any other outings. Students, and all residents, must stay in their homes unless traveling for an essential function.

Distance learning information for students and parents is available at <http://bit.ly/DistanceLearningMCOE>.

More information and additional resources are available at www.mcoe.org/covid19.

Sincerely,

Steve Tietjen, Ed.D., Merced County Superintendent of Schools
Sandra Schiber, Ed.D., Atwater Elementary School District
Bliss Propes, Ballico-Cressey Elementary School District
Adolfo Melara, Delhi Unified School District
Justin Miller, Ed.D., Dos Palos-Oro Loma Joint Unified School District
Lori Gonzalez, El Nido Elementary School District
Bryan Ballenger, Ed.D., Gustine Unified School District
Isabel Cabral-Johnson, Hilmar Unified School District
Scott M. Borba, Le Grand Union Elementary School District
Donna Alley, Le Grand Union High School District
Andres Zamora, Livingston Union School District
Mark Marshall, Ed.D., Los Banos Unified School District
Mike Crass, McSwain Union Elementary School District
Al Rogers, Ed.D., Merced City School District
Richard Lopez, Merced River Union Elementary School District
Alan Peterson, Merced Union High School District
Kristi Kingston, Plainsburg Union Elementary School District
Jose Gonzalez, Planada Elementary School District
Alison Kahl, Snelling-Merced Falls Union Elementary School District
John Curry, Weaver Union School District
Randall Heller, Winton Elementary School District