



March 13, 2020

Kings County Community:

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has caused great anxiety in our schools and communities. While local health officials have yet to confirm a case of community transmission, we do not yet know how this will ultimately impact our county. Simply put, we are dealing with the unknown, and the time has come for us to take decisive action on behalf of our students, staff and community.

In the face of the declaration of a state emergency by our governor, guidelines to restrict public gatherings, and now, our president declaring a national emergency, the superintendents of Kings County have met to consider the health risks posed to our students, staff and community. As a precautionary step to slow and prevent the spread of COVID-19, and after careful deliberations with local school district leaders and in consultation with the Kings County Department of Public Health, we hereby support the decision of schools and districts in our county to close schools through Spring Break. We are optimistic that we will resume classroom instruction after Spring Break with schools anticipated to reopen on April 14, 2020. We will continue to evaluate what is best for our community.

This is not a decision we take lightly. We know that temporarily closing a school has a tremendous impact on our families, and steps will need to be implemented to support the continuity of learning and to ensure students have access to healthy meals. But the safety of our students and staff remains our top priority, and we have confidence that this is the proper precautionary course for our county. Students have the right to attend safe schools.

At this time, county health officials believe the risk of transmission is low, and while there has been no evidence of confirmed cases affecting a student or staff member at any district site, we understand that the situation is constantly evolving. On the advice of our public health officials, we need to focus on containment. We continue to monitor information from federal, state, and local partners including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and health care providers on preparedness efforts and to guide appropriate care for those who may be at risk for illness associated with the virus.

Parents should contact their local school district office or school site for specific information related to their schools. Please support and follow direction from administrators regarding measures they are taking to keep all students and staff healthy and safe.

Thank you for your efforts to keep our children and our communities safe.

Sincerely,

The Superintendents of Kings County:

Xavier Pina
Armona Union Elementary School District

Tom Addington
Central Union Elementary School District

Rich Merlo
Corcoran Unified School District

Joy Gabler
Hanford Elementary School District

Victor Rosa
Hanford Joint Union High School District

Charlotte Hines
Island Union Elementary School District

Cathlene Anderson
Kings River Hardwick School District

Robin Jones
Kit Carson Union Elementary School District

Cindi Marshall
Lakeside Union Elementary School District

Cheryl Hunt
Lemoore Elementary School District

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Lemoore Union High School District

Paul VanLoon
Pioneer Union Elementary School District

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