



Pacific Union School District

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April 2, 2020

Dear Pacific Union Families,

I hope this letter finds you well. Our amazing teachers, aides, support staff, custodial staff, office staff, kitchen staff, and transportation staff have all continued to work to make sure we are meeting the needs of our community. I can't thank all of them enough and express how grateful and appreciative I am for their hard work and dedication to our students and families.

As many of you may have heard through news outlets and social media, the California State Superintendent of Instruction, Tony Thurman, and Governor Newsom announced that schools should close their facilities and focus on Distance Learning for the remainder of the school year. Please note this was not an official order, but in collaboration with the State, the Humboldt County office of Education (HCOE), and Humboldt County's Public Health Officer, we are following their recommendation. Our school facilities will be physically closed, but we will continue to provide educational experiences through distance learning to our students. Should circumstances change we will work with HCOE and our public health officer to reopen our school.

Our Pacific Union team has already been providing distance learning opportunities in mainly a paper/pencil format to our students. Over the next week we will be moving more towards a blended model of distance learning. We will continue to provide packets to students who may need them, but will emphasize online learning. This will allow us to continue to practice social distancing and limit physical interactions. The safety of our community and our staff is our primary concern.

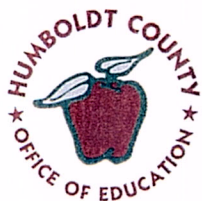
We are all experiencing these difficult and unfamiliar times together. We are being asked to do things we never imagined we would have to do. Some are being asked to become teachers overnight, older siblings are being asked to become caregivers to younger siblings, others are being named as essential employees, and teachers are being asked to do the unthinkable: to teach without being able to actually be in their classrooms with their students. Yet during these challenges I have seen so many people in our community step up in many ways. The Pacific Union community has come together to support each other through acts of kindness and words of support and encouragement. I am confident that this will continue throughout our time apart. As things continue to change, please stay connected to us and we will get through these unprecedented times together.

Once again, thank you for your patience and support as we all adjust to the challenges of staying at home and communicating with each other in new ways. I will continue to keep you updated as much as possible through this time of rapid and fluid change. I have also attached the Press Release from HCOE for your information. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to your teacher, our associate principal Ms. Nichols, or me. You can call the office and leave a message, or contact us by email.

Remember: together we are better and we've got this! Until we connect again, take care and stay healthy.

Sincerely,

Rene L. McBride



CHRIS N. HARTLEY, Ed.D., Superintendent

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DATE: April 2, 2020

FROM: Jenny Bowen
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State & County Officials: Schools Should Plan for Extended Distant Learning

Yesterday in a press conference, Governor Gavin Newsom, with the backing of Superintendent of Schools, Tony Thurmond, shared the expectation that all school districts and charters in California continue to provide distance learning opportunities for students and their families for the remainder of the school year.

Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) and local school districts, have consulted with Public Health Officer, Dr. Teresa Frankovich, who advises all school districts in Humboldt County follow the Governor's recommendation and plan for continued closure of facilities through the end of the school year.

According to Dr. Frankovich, "The situation is changing quickly and there is increasing evidence, as we look at impacted areas across the country, that aggressive social distancing can significantly help to slow transmission of this infection. Maintaining distance learning and keeping school facilities closed through the end of the school year will allow schools and families to plan appropriately. Schools and Public Health will continue to monitor the situation and should circumstances allow for an earlier return to school, we will make that decision together."

Humboldt County schools began school facility closures on March 16 and have been developing and delivering high quality distance learning instruction for students, providing students with meals, and working on systems for childcare. Humboldt County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Chris Hartley, supports the campuses being physically closed through the end of the academic year and applauds district efforts in meeting student needs, including the massive response in providing school meals.

"Schools are critical in assisting Public Health in emphasizing the importance of shelter in place and social distancing. We are thankful for their proactive efforts," states Dr. Frankovich.

"Our main priority is the health and safety of our students, families, and staff," states Hartley. "Social distancing remains critical as cases of COVID-19 continue to increase, and while we recognize the difficulty and challenges this poses to many, maintaining closure of school facilities is prudent and allows our educators and HCOE to continue developing and improving distance learning education for students."

All HCOE school programs will remain physically closed. Local districts will be working with their respective Boards to weigh local needs and state and local recommendations in determining their district plans for distance learning and facility closures, and announce to their communities accordingly. Additionally, in-person graduation events, promotions, and activities are yet to be fully determined and will be evaluated and communicated by individual districts as time draws.

HCOE will continue to partner with districts to improve upon the distance learning programs, services, and supports for districts and families in our community. Hartley reassures, “School is not over. Humboldt County schools are the heartbeat of our communities. They will continue to provide essential services for students and families by embracing innovation and collaboration.”

News, information, and resources for families, including meal distribution schedules, are available and regularly updated at hcoe.org/covid-19.
