



KERN HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

J. Bryan Batey, President

Joey O'Connell, Vice President

Jeff Flores, Clerk

Cynthia Brakeman, Clerk Pro Tem

Janice Graves, Member

BRYON J. SCHAEFER, Ed.D., SUPERINTENDENT

5801 SUNDALE AVENUE • BAKERSFIELD • CALIFORNIA • 93309-2924 • (661) 827-3100 • FAX:(661) 827-3301

March 20, 2020

Dear Kern High School District Staff:

First, let me say thank you. Thank you to every one of our staff members who are on the front lines serving our students and families during this uncertain and unprecedented time – whether you are working at our facilities and sites, or working virtually. “Front lines” is not an exaggeration. According to Governor Gavin Newsom and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, California public school employees and the services we provide are considered essential to the health and welfare of the communities we serve and our responsibilities to continue to provide meals and ongoing instruction for students has not changed in light of the Governor’s recent statewide “shelter in place” order.

As we face this global health pandemic, nutrition is a critical component in the battle against COVID-19. Children who receive school meals are less likely to suffer from nutritional inadequacies. Ensuring that kids, especially our low income and those with food insecurity, receive proper meals, with key vitamins, minerals, and nutrients will help maintain the health of our children and by extension their families and ultimately, we hope, our community. We are considered absolutely vital to the health of our community at this time and we must all rise to this challenge and heed the call.

Continuing the ongoing distance learning for our students is also vitally important. The expectations of educators to stay the course of providing lessons, grades, feedback, and instruction has not been lifted and also remains in place. Our kids need us now more than ever. They need our guidance, support, meals, and instruction so they continue to feel connected to their schools and education. We are their anchor. School, including meals and instruction, provides a sense of comfort, structure, and normalcy for our youngest members of society. We must continue to provide them with this type of security during this alarming time in our nation’s history.

We also need each other now more than ever, so we feel supported and connected as members of public service who are faced with the unparalleled challenge of determining how we best meet the needs of our students and families, while also balancing our own personal circumstances.

The superintendents and administrators are working tirelessly with our local education community leaders, state education leaders, public health, and others to obtain the most up to date information, guidance, and mandates as they become available. As you are aware, the messages are changing daily and we are receiving and evaluating them and adjusting our plans accordingly. We appreciate your patience and grace as we do our best to navigate and adapt.

We are continuing to provide grab-and-go meals to any child age 2 to 18. Students must be present to pick up their food. Small groups of selected staff members are present at our school sites today delivering those meals and addressing the public as they call and arrive at schools requesting assistance.

In the event the needs and demands of the public require additional staff to report to our schools and facilities, we will have to adjust these staffing levels and call in employees. As you know, we are all government employees and are considered disaster service workers. It is our individual and collective responsibility to serve the students, parents, community, and taxpayers.

I have received information about some of our incredible and dedicated staff members who, although not requested to be physically present on campus, have arrived at school ready and willing to help. As impressed and grateful as I am for these courageous and selfless individuals, we need to remember the reason we have limited our staffing to very small numbers is because we are adhering to the directives of the President and Governor to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by extremely limiting interpersonal contact to the extent possible while still fulfilling the mandates to provide meals and instruction. Additionally, we need our workforce to remain as healthy as possible to continue our services, especially in the event we may need to call upon more employees to report for duty.

With that said, if you have been requested to report to work, your presence is absolutely expected and very necessary. Our students, parents, and community are counting on us to adhere to our responsibilities as public service workers to keep these operations going. At this time we are serving the grab-and-go meals at our comprehensive high school campuses and Nueva High School from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm, Monday through Friday, through April 9, 2020. We will monitor and assess this structure and await further direction from state and local government in order to mobilize plans for continued meal service after April 9 and beyond.

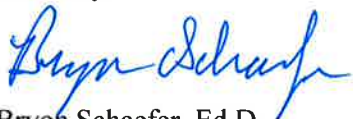
If you are called to report to work and are unable to do so due to your own illness, in order to care for an ill family member, or due to other serious extenuating circumstances, you must notify your administrator immediately. If you have questions about this, please contact your site administrator or Human Resources.

Our health care insurer, Anthem Blue Cross administered by Self Insured Schools of California (SISC), provides zero co-pay virtual contact with doctors who can help those who are ill without requiring them to leave home (unless in dire or emergency situations). These virtual doctors are available 24 hours per day every day, and are facilitated by telephone and video through the MD Live application, mdlive.com/sisc or you can call 1-800-657-6169. Additionally, the Kern High School District has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that can provide you with tips and strategies to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, and other valuable mental health resources. You can contact our EAP by calling 1-800-999-7222.

Lastly, in addition to my limitless gratitude to each and every one of you, I also want to thank the health care professionals who are putting their own health at risk to serve all of us. Other federal, state, and local public service employees, grocery store clerks, pharmacy employees, delivery drivers, individuals in uniform, and countless others who are also stepping up to support and protect our communities deserve our thanks as well.

We will get through this together.

Sincerely,



Bryon Schaefer, Ed.D.
Superintendent