



## BOARD OF EDUCATION

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## SUPERINTENDENT

Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.

### Message from Superintendent Nelson

April 3, 2020

Happy Friday, Fresno Unified Family!

Today marks the end of our third week of school closures and much has been accomplished this week. We worked together with our partners at the Fresno Teachers Association to implement “TLC” every week. TLC means our teachers are Teaching, Learning and Connecting every week with their students and colleagues. We also began distributing laptops for our fourth through 12th graders and dispensed an additional 3,500 tablets for our pre-K through third graders. As a reminder, your school will contact you directly over the next few weeks to schedule a device pick-up time – please do not go to your school without an appointment. Certainly of note, we served over 261,000 meals just this week alone, bringing us to a total of almost 590,000 meals served to our community in just the 15 weekdays of school closures thus far.

As you have most likely heard, our board of education voted unanimously on Wednesday, April 1 to extend our school closures through the remainder of this 2019-2020 school year. We know that this is the right decision for the safety and health of our students and staff, but we are all grieving the loss of this school year, especially for our seniors. That mourning process is hard and very few of us have made it to the acceptance stage yet. These feelings are valid and we all must work through these stages of grief in our own time and space. Please do not ignore your mental health during this time that we are sheltering in place to protect our physical health.

With that, there are a few important notes I want to make clear before we head into spring break this next week.

First, we remain committed to providing some sort of celebration for our graduating seniors. We do not know when that will be or exactly what it will look like, but I can guarantee you that we will celebrate this huge milestone for our seniors and their families.

Second, we are working in live time on a grading policy for our fourth quarter and I cannot understate the vast complexity involved in making these decisions. It would be irresponsible of us to push out our entire proposal before principals and our board of education have had the chance to weigh in fully. However, we will share two high-level highlights of our proposed plan thus far. Please remember that this plan is subject to change with feedback from our district leadership and board.

1. No student will be harmed academically by these school closures. This means that your grade of record for the third quarter would be the lowest grade you could receive in your fourth quarter grades.
2. Students will be provided multiple opportunities to improve their third quarter grade before the end of the calendar school year.

Third, while campuses will remain closed, our school year of learning is not over. This fourth quarter of learning will be focused on three areas:

1. Students improving their grades
2. Students preparing for their next grade level of learning
3. Students learning for growth – because our education system is not just about teaching for a state test or a grade

Lastly, we are working with your school sites on how to obtain your personal items left in classrooms, how to distribute items bought through fundraisers, how to handle reimbursement for events like prom or Grad Night, and how to get caps and gowns to our graduating seniors. We just do not have those answers quite yet. As I have asked you every day for the past 14 days of school closures, I am going to ask you again on this 15th day of school closures to please give our staff grace and patience as we work through this unprecedented time.

We will be a bit quieter next week and we encourage you to enjoy your spring break as much as you can while still sheltering in place and practicing social distancing. We will continue serving meals next week except on Good Friday and will send out further messaging on our website and social media channels reminding you of those school sites serving meals. For the latest updates around school closures, meal sites, and instructional resources, I encourage you to continue to visit [www.fresnounified.org](http://www.fresnounified.org). Take care of yourselves and your loved ones!