

# BURREL UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

16704 S. Jameson Ave. Riverdale, Ca. 93656 • (559)866-5634 Phone • (559) 866-5280 Fax

Elizabeth Runyon, Superintendent/Principal

March 12, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This message is for Burrel Union Elementary School District's parent and students providing an update on the District's planning and preparedness efforts in regards to the coronavirus COVID-19.

On Saturday, March 7 Fresno County's Department of Public Health confirmed its first case of COVID-19, the result of a community member contracting the illness while traveling. I have been in communication with our county health officials and will be receiving daily updates from Fresno County's Department of Public Health as we recognize that it is not a matter of "if" but of "when" we will have other cases identified in our community. We are working arm-in-arm with public health officials to ensure that their best practices for schools are in place in Burrel Union, and will continue to keep our community updated through our phone, text, email and websites.

Recognizing parental interest in the actions of our schools during this outbreak, I wanted to share the following information with you about steps Burrel Union has taken, and additional actions following the most recent announcement here in Fresno County.

We are daily disinfecting highly used surfaces (like doorknobs and counters), encouraging proper handwashing and covering of coughs, eliminating shared water stations for our athletic practices, and other healthy classroom practices in place regularly to reduce the spread of colds and flu. Additionally, as of Thursday:

- An age-appropriate video lesson was presented to every student at school on proper handwashing and hand hygiene.
- Prior to releasing students for lunch, students are given time for and expected to wash or sanitize their hands. The same procedures are followed upon students' return from recess and lunch.
- Signage has been placed in highly visible locations around campus reminding of the importance of good hand hygiene and proper hand washing practices.

We are committed to following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, and California and Fresno County departments of public health related to further actions such as canceling classes or events. We are poised to act quickly and decisively as the situation evolves, always keeping the best interest of our entire community at the forefront.

## **Other helpful information for parents:**

### **Are we canceling activities?**

That is not the recommendation of health officials. Instead, we are monitoring the situation in California and Fresno County in particular and will follow best practices as put forth by Fresno County and California health officials and CDC. When academic, sports or performance teams are traveling

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to out of town competitions, we are also evaluating the best practice recommendations for the destination county to which our students are traveling. This is also true of staff travel for professional development. We will adjust as needed should the guidance of health officials change as the situation evolves.

## **Why aren't you cancelling classes?**

Public health officials do not recommend the cancellation of classes as an effective action in this situation. We are following their best practices and working arm-in-arm with health officials to ensure we respond appropriately based on the facts we have. It's important that we not second guess public health officials, who are the experts.

## **What is being done on BUESD campus to prevent the spread of illnesses like the flu and COVID19?**

It's important to keep in mind that the best way to prevent the spread of viruses in general is to follow common-sense health practices. These remain the most effective method to avoid the spread of COVID19 as well. In addition to the following practices, this week we have implemented additional training of students on proper handwashing techniques, posted information throughout campus identifying proper handwashing and cough covering, arranging time before and after lunches and recess for additional handwashing by students.

Our school campus classrooms, common spaces and restrooms are cleaned every night. Starting the first week of January, we adjusted our custodial schedule by increasing cleaning schedule (wiping down desks, tables, etc).

Additionally, students and staff are asked to stay home if they are sick, cover their mouths if coughing, and avoid sharing drinks or food. Classroom surfaces and door handles are frequently being wiped down and disinfected.

## **How can you keep informed on the corona virus outbreak?**

The latest news about the coronavirus outbreak and actions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control is available online at <https://www.cdc.gov/> and through the Fresno County Public Health Department at <https://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/public-health>.

As new information is available, or if public health recommendations for schools change we will keep our community informed.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Runyon  
Superintendent/Principal

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