

Good Afternoon Jefferson School District Families, this is Jim Bridges. As the Jefferson School District Superintendent, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your patience as we navigate through this unprecedented time. Watching the evening news over the past few weeks has been increasingly troublesome. From hearing of the rapid spread of COVID-19 across the globe, to the lack of Personal Protective Equipment for our medical staff, to families missing out on important life milestones.

Adding to this, we've been asked to shelter in place in our homes for weeks and in many cases take on overseeing our children's education while we adapt to working at home. Many of our families are essential workers. This is a stressful time for us all but we can find comfort in the stories of hope and good deeds.

I am inspired by the careful planning and hard work of our school community. We have been asked to plan and execute the largest change in instructional delivery in a century. With your support, our district is committed to providing online learning that meets the needs of all of our families. The big question on everyone's mind right now is are we going to finish the year in a distance learning model?

On Tuesday, the State Superintendent, Tony Thurmond, shared that the school year isn't over, but it is unsafe for students to return to school this year. That was followed up by Governor Gavin Newsom sharing the same information at a news conference yesterday. Due to the current safety concerns and need for ongoing social distancing, and after consultation with San Joaquin County Superintendent James Mousalimas and San Joaquin County's Public Health Director, Dr. Maggie Park, the Jefferson School District has decided to remain in a Distance Learning model for the remainder of the school year. This does not mean that school is over for the year, but rather we should put all efforts into strengthening our delivery of education through distance learning.

Over my 25 years in education I've had a number of proud moments and the proudest have always been being part of a team that has accomplished something really big. For the past few weeks our amazing staff of educators has been learning the tools necessary to provide a robust digital learning environment to students. I'm thankful that we took the time to plan and prepare. I've been so proud every morning watching teachers, coaches, classified staff and administrators coming together to problem solve, share ideas, and ask for help. I know that we still have much to learn and refine, but I'm so proud of each staff member for working together to make this happen. We are all being asked to step out of our comfort zones during this challenging time, and mistakes are not only expected but useful because we all learn from them. This isn't going to be easy, we are going to stumble, but our school community is ready for this new challenge.

I want to remind you to put your family first. It is vital that we all heed the shelter in place order, practice social distancing, wash our hands until it feels like the skin is going to come off, and support our friends and neighbors through this time. The Jefferson School District Family will get through this by sticking together and helping each other out. Thank you for being our partner in your child's learning.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 2, 2020

020-032: San Joaquin County Schools Recommendation on 2019-20 School Year

Contact: Zack Johnson, (209) 468-4937

**Superintendent of Schools Recommends Distance Learning for Remainder of 2019-20 School Year**  
*Recommendation follows statements from California Governor and State Superintendent of Public Instruction to keep school campuses closed to help prevent the spread of COVID-19*

San Joaquin County Superintendent of Schools James Mousalimas today announced a recommendation for schools in San Joaquin County to pursue a distance-learning model through the remainder of the 2019-20 school year while extending the closure of all public school facilities to help stop the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Superintendent Mousalimas' recommendation was made in consultation with San Joaquin County Public Health Officer Dr. Maggie Park.

The action follows the March 31 recommendation from State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond that was supported by California Governor Gavin Newsom at the April 1 press briefing where Newsom also noted that it is very unlikely that it would be possible to send children back to school campuses before the end of the school year.

"During this unprecedented public health emergency, educational leaders in San Joaquin County have taken steps to protect the safety of our students and community by closing schools to help stop the spread of COVID-19. My recommendation is for schools in San Joaquin County to continue to do their part to protect our communities while providing for the educational needs of students through distance learning," Mousalimas said. "Even though school facilities are closed for the remainder of the school year, the school year is not over, and the learning does not stop. Our local schools are equipped to take on this challenge. They have already adapted during the current school closures to provide meals and instructional opportunities for students."

In the coming days and weeks, districts and schools will provide their students and families with information regarding how grades, graduation ceremonies, transcripts, scholarships, and continued distance learning instruction will be handled.

"We ask for patience and understanding as we are all quickly transitioning into a new way of teaching and learning to meet the health and safety impacts of COVID-19," Mousalimas said. "Working together we can and will meet this challenge."

***About the San Joaquin County Office of Education:***

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