

# #WeAreCarmelUnified

From the Office of the Superintendent Barb Dill-Varga, Ed.D.



March 18, 2020 - "Meeting the Moment"- Edition #1

## "Meeting the Moment"

Governor Newsom recently said:

*"It is decisions, not conditions, that will determine our fate and future as it relates to COVID-19. We have agency. We can change the future...We will meet or not meet the moment. I am confident we will meet the moment."*

Starting today, under this banner, we hope to send out a biweekly update on how Carmel Unified School District is taking action to "meet the moment" relative to the COVID-19.

## Message from Board President Karl Pallastrini

The Board of Education is thinking about you and wishing each of you the very best in these troubled times. It is reassuring to know that the District's efforts in developing and implementing our plan of action has been timely and effective. The efforts by all of the staff involved follow in the article below *It Takes A Village*. The Board of Education remains confident that this coordinated effort led by Superintendent Dill-Varga and our District staff is thorough, well thought out, and flexible in meeting the ever changing conditions brought on by this Pandemic. We appreciate the efforts put into this as so many on staff have gone above and beyond the call of duty to make it happen. Please continue to take advantage of our on-line learning activities, and be sure to ask questions and share thoughts and ideas as the need arises. *Karl Pallastrini / President CUSD Board of Education*

## It Takes A Village

*Meeting the Moment* is possible when all parts of the organization work together. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of our unions (certificated and classified), our non represented groups, our administrative staff, and our School Board, we will successfully manage these challenges.

We also could not accomplish this without the support of our students, our parents, our community members, and

our area businesses and nonprofits. My heartfelt thanks for these collective efforts!

## Communication Protocol

First suggestion is to [direct you to our website](#). In addition to that, we will be sending you a bi-weekly newsletter via this format, highlighting our progress at providing quality instruction for your students during this time of pandemic crisis.

## Getting Ready for Online or Remote Instruction

Staff did a great job getting material ready in a very short time in advance of schools closing. They have been preparing for this transition since Friday, March 13 with instruction starting by Wednesday, March 18.

You will be receiving updated information on how instruction will occur for your children via email from principals and teachers and/or via school websites. Typically elementary schools have sent materials home and secondary are using digital resources.

The California Department of Education has defined for us that Distance Learning is "Instruction in which the student and instructor are in different locations" and recognizes that this will look differently depending on the age and needs of each child. It may involve technology, but for some that may not be possible.

## FREE FOOD: A Two-Pronged Approach To Support our Families and How You Can Help

### First

The School Lunch Program will provide meals to any child 18 or younger during school closure. Beginning Monday, March 23rd, CUSD will provide breakfast and lunch grab-and-go meals to individuals under the age of 18 twice a week. Meals will be delivered on Mondays with meals for two days, and again on Wednesday with meals for 3 days.

Meals will be distributed from a district van, and may be picked up by students at these locations:

- Carmel Middle School Cafeteria parking lot: 11:30 - 11:45 a.m.
- Big Sur River Inn parking lot: 12:30 - 12:45 p.m.
- Big Sur Post Office parking lot: 1:15 - 1:30 p.m.
- Tularcitos Elementary School Bus loading zone 11:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- Cachagua Community Center parking Lot: 1:00 - 1:15 p.m.

## **Second**

The Carmel Middle School Gymnasium is one staging point for supporting our families who have nutritional needs. Our compassionate team of staff, CUSD board members, and community members have organized this center to receive your non-perishable food items and other essential food household supplies every morning, from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m..

This is a combined effort with CUSD, *This Club Saves Lives*, board members, and community members. We are using district vans — driven by staff who have been pre-approved to drive vans — for weekly deliveries to families in need in all parts of our district.

Those who wish to drop off donations may come to the CMS gym Monday through Thursday, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.. Those in need who live close to the middle school may come to the entrance to the gym on Thursdays from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. to receive assistance. Vans are delivering boxed goods on Thursdays between 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to the Cachagua Children's Center, Ventana Inn, Big Sur River Inn, and Post Ranch.

Many thanks to Santa Catalina for donation of their perishables to assist with this effort and to Safeway and the Food Bank. It takes a village! Contact Tess Arthur for questions or to add support at [tarthur@carmelunified.org](mailto:tarthur@carmelunified.org).

### **What is most needed**

We've found in these uncertain times that money is best so we can buy the needed items as they become available. Please help by making a donation through Venmo or PayPal. Here's the direct link for PayPal: [paypal.me/thisclubsaveislives](https://paypal.me/thisclubsaveislives). If you have Venmo, send a donation to @thisclub-saveslives. Thank you for your support of our students and community families!

## **Tech Support**

Please reach out to your teacher for any trouble you may have accessing their materials online. If they cannot assist you directly, they will notify the Tech Department to reach out to assist you.

## **District Office is Working Remotely**

Our district office is available to assist you from our remote locations. Please use email to contact us!

### **Human Resources Office Point of Contacts:**

Classified: Geri Simmons [gsimmons@carmelunified.org](mailto:gsimmons@carmelunified.org)  
Certificated: Kristen Quilty [kquilty@carmelunified.org](mailto:kquilty@carmelunified.org)

### **Business Office Point of Contact:**

Kathy Vance [kvance@carmelunified.org](mailto:kvance@carmelunified.org)

### **Technology Office/Student Services Point of Contact:**

Anna Medina [amedina@carmelunified.org](mailto:amedina@carmelunified.org)

### **Curriculum + Instruction Point of Contact:**

Michelle Mahaney [mmahaney@carmelunified.org](mailto:mmahaney@carmelunified.org)

### **Special Education Point of Contact:**

Sharon Setliff [ssetliff@carmelunified.org](mailto:ssetliff@carmelunified.org)

### **Superintendent's Office Point of Contact:**

Tricia Zarevich [tzarevich@carmelunified.org](mailto:tzarevich@carmelunified.org)

**\*\* If you are not sure and need guidance please contact Tricia Zarevich [tzarevich@carmelunified.org](mailto:tzarevich@carmelunified.org) and she will direct it accordingly.**

## **Mental Wellness During the Closure**

Your health and safety is our number one priority. Below are some resources for you and your family to view or access if you are in need:

Talking to kids about the Coronavirus:

<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

Coping with Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks:

<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4885.pdf>

County of Monterey Behavioral Health Department:

<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/health/behavioral-health>

## **Supporting our Students with Special Needs**

Our special education teachers and itinerant providers (e.g., Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Educationally Related Mental Health Provider, and Behavior Support Provider), have been working diligently on a plan to provide continuous remote services for students with disabilities.

Services will be provided in the form of modified packets, teletherapy, video platforms, and/or consultation over the phone. All services will be documented in our special education information system.

Our special education staff will be checking in frequently with families and students during the closure. Meetings or assessments that were in process will now be deferred until school resumes. If you have any questions, you

may continue to contact the Department of Special Education at (831) 624-1546, ext. 2010.

## Social Distancing

Those countries who have been more successful at limiting the spread of this virus have done so by paying attention to Social Distancing. What does this mean for you and your family?

The advice from the experts is to stay home with your children. They tell us that we should not be allowing our students to congregate together. This will be a difficult message for you to deliver, for while our children are not as likely to contract or suffer ill effects from this virus, they can be carriers to the older members of our community. We are developing some online resources to share with you that may help with engagement. A few links have been shared at the end of this newsletter with more to come in future editions.

The Governor has asked for the home isolation of the seniors in our community, age 65 and older and on March 17, 2020 a **Shelter in Place Order** was given to all residents of Monterey County through April 8, 2020.

## California Department of Education (CDE) March 18, 2020 Webinar - Takeaways for Schools

- “We are all in this together.”
- Distance Learning: currently being defined by the CDE as “Instruction in which the student and instructor are in different locations.”
- Governor Gavin Newsom has declared the suspension of state testing requirements for California for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.
- The Executive Order guarantees funding for schools continues.

## Board Meetings

We have postponed and will reschedule the April 8, 2020 Board Meeting. All area school districts are working with legal counsel and state organizations to organize for future meetings that might take place using remote technologies.

### Update on GO Bond

The Board of Education, working in conjunction with the Superintendent, has made the decision to postpone efforts on plans for moving forward with the General Obligation Bond. We realize that in these challenging times, it is not prudent to move forward at this time.

## Final Thoughts:

These are unprecedented times presenting new challenges, but I am overwhelmingly impressed by the collective and collaborative efforts of all of our employees, board members, corporate and individual volunteers, community members and students to make sure that our students and their families are safe, are fed, and are receiving quality educational experiences. This is a work in progress and so patience is necessary, but, oh my goodness, this has been a truly amazing last few days!

Thank You Everyone!  
Barb

## Next Newsletter: March 23, Monday

### Taking the Edge off of “Shelter in Place”

I realize that, out of necessity, many of you are becoming our partners in keeping our children engaged and learning. I thank you for your willingness to wear that hat, too! In that spirit, I am going to share a few ideas in every newsletter of resources that are crossing my “virtual desk.” Here are just a couple to get us started.

[Monterey Bay Aquarium Webcams](#) - many online links to view their exhibits from your home. I love the jellyfish!

From one of our Carmel High teachers, Diana Govan ([dgovan@carmelunified.org](mailto:dgovan@carmelunified.org)) please read...

HeartMath Institute researches and develops reliable, scientifically based tools that bridge the connection between heart and mind and deepen people’s connection with the hearts of others. Their tools help people reduce stress, increase resilience and unlock their natural intuitive guidance for making better choices. When I consider our families with young ones at home while still having to work online, these 2 links might be the most welcome now.

The HeartSmarts Adventure is evidenced-based, multi-modality and kid-tested! It’s FREE right now using this link:

<https://www.heartmath.org/education/e-learning/heartsmarts-adventure/100k-coherent-kids-initiative/>

And here is a link to a wider variety of materials and information for parents:

<https://www.heartmath.org/resources/parenting/>

For more information and free resources, head over to their website:

<https://www.heartmath.org/>

Diana is willing to assist if you have questions.