



June 19, 2020

Good evening Grimmway Schools Faculty and Staff,

As the 2019-2020 school year comes to a close, it probably would not be hyperbolic to say that it was an unprecedented and extraordinarily challenging year. From navigating a global pandemic, to school shutdowns and social distancing, then to the subsequent shift in real-time to distance learning, and finally the school year ending with a series of tragedies reminding us that our country still has a ways to go in coming terms with our morally problematic history of racially inequitable systems and structures. The national outrage over which has resulted in some profound and important questions being asked about how to address the systemic inequities that still continue to this day in our country. It is my hope that out of these tragedies can emerge a more just and equitable society that has learned difficult lessons from reflecting upon its past and is prepared to forge a future that reflects the highest ideals of equality and justice for all in this country. While I am hopeful, there is still much work for each of us to do.

While there were no doubt significant challenges these past few months, I suspect that in navigating these challenges, each of you may have grown professionally somewhat as a result of being dropped into the deep end of distance learning and never blinking. Not only did each of you ensuring that our communities continued being served throughout the school shutdowns, but perhaps most impressive was that you did so in a way that our scholars always felt loved and cared for. There are many things that you have no doubt learned these past few months that will make you a more effective educator going forward.

Hopefully, there was personal growth as well. Being confined to our homes and having severe restriction on contact with others likely made each of us appreciate even more how important the actual presence of those we love is to our sense of well-being. At the outset of the shutdown I shared the following quote, "Adversity does not build character, it reveals it." What I witnessed these past few months from all of you was a deep and abiding desire – no matter how profound the challenge - to continue to make sure that we continued to *serve* our scholars and their families. That passion and the dogged determination to continue to serve *despite* the challenges faced, represents the very essence of "character." Your efforts over these past few months will be remembered for the rest of our scholar's lives.

Each of you should be immensely proud of the work we have done over these past several months.

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CMO Transitions

Greg West

For those of you who may not already be aware, Greg has decided to leave Grimmway Schools at the end of the school year. Greg is going to be directing an exciting initiative with KCSOS called the Kern Integrated Data System, or K.I.D.S. The goal of K.I.D.S. is to share real-time student outcome data to assist all stakeholders in making informed decisions about what is best for students, teachers, and schools. KCSOS is fortunate to be getting someone with Greg's expertise and passion for serving children in Kern County – particularly those children who are among the most underserved.

Greg first began with Grimmway Academy in 2015, and since then has served in a variety of positions, including principal of Grimmway Academy in Arvin. Most of you know him through his current position as Director of School Support (DSS), working with both campuses on a variety of tasks related to business operations, LCAP, Oversight, IT, and a variety of other compliance related responsibilities. Greg's contributions to the growth of Grimmway Schools were invaluable to ensure the continued success of the network. We will all miss Greg's expertise, problem solving, and dry wit. Please join with me in thanking Greg for everything he has done for Grimmway Schools. We wish Greg nothing but the best as he begins this next chapter in his professional journey.

Dr. Wendy Creek

I am excited to announce that Dr. Wendy Creek will be joining the CMO Home Office in the position of Chief Academic Officer (CAO). STEM teachers may know Wendy through her work the past three years with the Loyola Marymount University Center for Math and Science Teaching (LMU CMAST) - and teachers in other subjects may remember Wendy through the distance learning PDs that she and her partner Dr. Anita Kriede put together for us this Spring.

Wendy is a Bakersfield native, and has an extensive and varied background in education, beginning with her first teaching "gig" at College Heights Elementary in the Bakersfield City School District. Wendy's focus the past several years has been on standards-aligned instruction and leadership development through LMU. An interesting bit of Wendy Creek trivia – her Bachelors Degree is in Musicology, and although her professional journey has taken her through both the multiple subject and single subject (Math) worlds (she holds



credentials in both), her passion for music continues to burn bright, and manifests itself in her and her husband's classic rock cover band. Wendy will be a tremendous addition to the Grimmway Team, and is very much looking forward to continuing her work with all of you.

School Reopening Update

CMO and site leadership teams have been planning our schools reopening. Our plan will be informed by the following guidebooks:

- The California Department of Education (CDE) Guidebook for reopening schools (Click [HERE](#)).
- The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Industry Guidance for Schools and School Programs (Click [HERE](#)).

Here are some very high-level takeaways relevant for us:

- We can have students back on campus, but only if we maintain safe social distancing (6ft.). This will require us to be creative in terms of staggering when students are on campus.
- We will need to have a screening protocol for allowing students on campus. We already have protocols established for child supervision that we have been using for the past three months. However, we will have to scale up to accommodate more students.
- We will need to adhere to healthy respiratory hygiene protocols for students and staff (similar to those we had in place before our schools shut down).
- We will need to have strict cleaning and disinfecting protocols for classrooms.
- We will have to continue distance learning for those families who do not want to send their children back to school – along with on-site learning. We will have a hybrid approach – with the through-line being your online class.

Much more to come over the next few weeks. If you have any interest in being on the academic program task force that will be working on the details of our reopening plan, please send me an email.



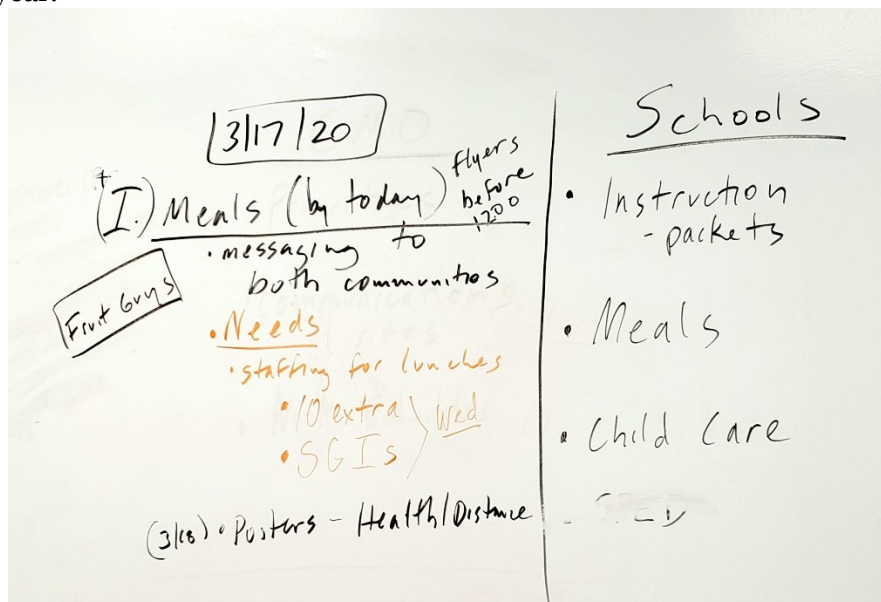
Just a reminder, **the 2020-21 school year will begin as scheduled on August 3rd.**

Summer professional development is still scheduled to begin on Monday July 20, and continue through the week of July 27. While it is a safe bet that this summer's PD will look a lot different - how it is different will be determined over the next few weeks. More details are forthcoming.

Budget Update

[HERE](#) is a link to the presentation that accompanied my budget call earlier this week. Your site leadership and the HR team are continuing their meetings next week with classified staff. If you have any questions in the meantime, please reach out directly to Mike Romero.

As final punctuation on the strange journey that the 2020-2021 school year has been, below is a photo that I took earlier today of the wall in the CMO Home Office conference room. The date (3/17/20) represents that last time that the entire CMO team was together at the Home Office. We obviously were in the very early stages of figuring out what was coming next, but for some reason it struck me as a fitting way to look back on what has certainly been an unusual year.



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I am already looking ahead to next year with great optimism for what we are going to accomplish together. The challenges of COVID are going to continue to push us to become better educators – more innovative, more creative, and more effective than we were before COVID changed everything. Over these next few weeks please enjoy your time off! To say that it is well-earned is an understatement of cosmic proportions.

Please be careful and continue to be leaders in our community by modeling the CDPH guidelines on social distancing and wearing face coverings in public.

Thank you for being such amazing professionals over these past few months. I look forward to “seeing” everyone together on Monday July 20th.

With deepest gratitude and profound optimism,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Casey Yeazel".

Casey Yeazel
Executive Director