



April 11, 2020

Dear Grimmway Schools' Faculty and Staff.

I hope you and your family remain safe and healthy through these most challenging times. The dramatic spread of COVID-19 has reached the point where it is now likely that it has touched someone in your family, or a friend, a former colleague, a neighbor, etc.

All of us have been compelled to alter the way we live and work in order to do what we can to slow or stop the spread of the virus – especially to protect those in our society who are the most vulnerable amongst us. While it has certainly been difficult, the social distancing that we have all been engaged in over the past several weeks appears to be making an impact by “flattening the curve” of the spread, buying vital time for our hospitals and medical professionals to prepare for when cases peak in our community (See Fig. 1). It is very early, however, and cases could spike if we ceased social distancing behaviors too soon. But, at least to this point we can take solace in the fact that – while definitely challenging – social distancing is making an impact in slowing the spread.

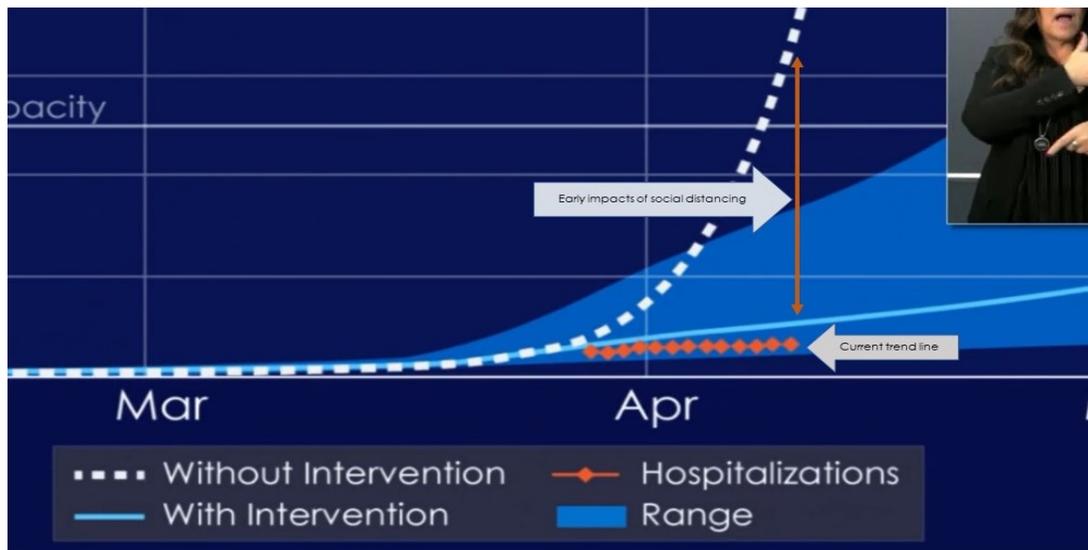


Fig.1: Screengrab of CA Governor's briefing 041020

We still have a long way to go before we are in a position to return to “normal.” However, it is likely that there are several lessons that we can learn about our practice during this ordeal that will only make us more effective once we finally are able to out COVID-19 in the rearview mirror.

5080 California Ave, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93309

(661) 432-7880 | Main

(661) 404-4871 | Fax

www.grimmwayschools.org



Click [HERE](#) (Spanish, click [HERE](#)) for updates from the CDC on how to protect yourself and others from the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

A few weeks ago, I shared with everyone the following quote from J.L. Allen, “Adversity does not build character, it reveals it.” Over the past few weeks, I have been moved and inspired by everyone’s dogged resolve in ensuring that we are providing the essential services for which we have been called upon by the State of California, and more importantly – to serve the needs of our communities. From our site leadership teams to our Café staff, from our custodial teams to our teachers – everyone has been going above and beyond in their efforts to ensure that we are delivering on our promise despite the challenges and uncertainty thrown at us by COVID-19.

I am deeply proud of everyone in the Grimmway Schools Network for stepping up in the way everyone has been doing. A few weeks ago, I asked everyone to be flexible, patient, generous with extending grace. Grace to your scholars, to their families, to your colleagues, and to leadership. These are uncharted waters for all of us, and we all are going to have to lean heavily on one another as the weeks turn into months. Your dedication to serve gives me great confidence in our collective ability to overcome any adversity that we may face over the next few months.

All that being said, thank you. You are all genuinely appreciated, and your contributions to our mission are deeply valued.

COVID-19 Prevention updates

Recently, the CDC recommended that face coverings be worn in public setting where social distancing measures are not possible. The purpose of wearing a face covering is to prevent the spread of the virus from someone who may not be showing any symptoms. The guidelines are intended to protect those who you may come into contact with during the course of your duties. Wearing a face covering does not replace the existing guidelines around social distancing, hygiene, or sanitation of facilities – but is intended as an additional preventive step.

Beginning on Tuesday, 4/14, if you are going to be on your school site, whether preparing meals, supervising children, or performing other essential functions, we ask that you wear a face covering. The CDC has provided guidance on cloth face coverings, and has provided a document that outlines how to make your own and how to wear safely. We have a limited number of face coverings that will be available for use next week.

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Click [HERE](#) (Spanish, click [HERE](#)) for updated guidance on using face coverings, including instructions from the CDC on DIY cloth face coverings.

In 2005, a collection of essays from a leadership course taught by Stanford Professor James G. Marsh was published titled, *On Leadership*. Marsh used great works of literature to frame many of his lessons, including Othello and Don Quixote. The final chapter in his book instructs all leaders to make sure that they never forget that in order for organizations to flourish, there needs to be time for both the *plumbing* (necessary operational duties) and the *poetry* (that which speaks to the soul).

So, on that note, click [HERE](#) for a little poetry that I came across last week (immediately after the COVID PSA). I hope it speaks to your soul in these challenging times as much as it did mine.

I hope that the rest of your weekend is filled with peace, joy, and good health.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Casey Yeazel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being the most prominent.

Casey Yeazel
Executive Director
Grimmway Schools