

From the Chancellor's Desk



Update – Fires, COVID

September 23, 2021

KCCD Colleagues:

I wanted to drop you a note with an update on the wildfires that are raging in our service areas and throughout California right now, as well as its impact on our colleges.

During my walk with Neo this morning, I saw the red light of the sun through the smoky dawn haze, and the soot in the air started to give me a headache. We've gotten used to wearing masks during the COVID crisis, and I'd also encourage you to continue masking during these wildfires so that you breathe in less particulate matter. You can also keep healthy by staying indoors whenever possible and avoiding outdoor exercise during bad air days like these.



Photo from www.visaliatimesdelta.com



Photo from www.visaliatimesdelta.com

The Cerro Coso campus in Ridgecrest is enveloped in a blanket of smoke, and [Porterville College is serving as an evacuation point for communities near the Windy Fire](#), which has burned 31,388 acres of the Sequoia National Forest and Tule River Indian Reservation. President Habib and her team are doing an extraordinary job in receiving the evacuees. All across the district and in our communities, let's support our colleagues at Porterville College and keep them in our thoughts. If you know somebody at PC, drop them a quick note of encouragement and gratitude for helping vulnerable families during this time. President Habib and the PC team are working tirelessly to support this effort.

COVID-19 Updates

Kern County ICUs reach highest level in 8 months

<https://www.kget.com/health/coronavirus/local-ic-us-reach-highest-level-in-eight-months-as-covid-19-continues-to-grip-kern-county-for-a-third-time/>

As of September 22, there were 80 Kern County residents in the ICU with COVID-19, which is the highest number of patients in ICUs since January 30, [according to KGET](#). State projections are that this week would be the peak of hospitalizations, two weeks after local cases peak. [Kern County Public Health confirmed 391 new cases and 4 deaths](#) on Wednesday, September 22.

FDA authorizes booster shots for seniors over 65 and for those at high risk.

[The Food and Drug Administration has cleared the way](#) for a third dose of the Pfizer vaccine to be issued to individuals who are 65 years of age or older or who may have a condition or occupation that puts them at increased risk for COVID-19. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are meeting on Thursday, September 23](#) to issue final approval on administering booster shots.

Pandemic creating shortage of teachers and school staff

Across the country, school districts across the K-14 system are experiencing staffing shortages as COVID-19 has created unprecedented burnout on our educators and their support teams. [The Associated Press reported a study from the National Education Association](#) that said 32 percent of teachers were driven to leave the profession earlier than expected as a result of the pandemic. Teachers are twice as likely as other employed adults to feel frequent job-related stress and three times more likely to experience depression, according to another survey cited in the article.

Percentage of enrollments f2f vs distance ed

I thought you might appreciate seeing this data snippet from Bob Ngo that I picked up at one of the meetings. For the Fall semester district-wide, about 67 percent of all enrollments are in distance education courses. Cerro Coso has the highest percentage of distance education enrollments, at 85.4 percent. Porterville College has the lowest percentage of distance education enrollments, at 52.5 percent. Bakersfield College's percentage of distance education enrollments is slightly lower than the district-wide data, at 65.8 percent.

I appreciate our faculty, classified staff and managers for all that they are doing to keep our working and learning environments vibrant and safe. KCCD #InItTogether.

That's a wrap for now.

The future remains bright at KCCD!

With much warmth and collegiality
sonya

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#KCCDDaringMightyThings

