



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 27, 2020

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Lynwood Unified Educators Connecting with Students Through Technology During School Closures

Lynwood – Firebaugh High School English and IB Theatre teacher Kate Thomas Butiu has gone from camera shy to YouTube personality. Accompanied by her two teaching assistants, a pair of pit bulls, she leaves her students motivational messages, assignments and personal anecdotes.

Thomas is among the Lynwood Unified educators who are embracing technology and channeling new ways to inspire learners amidst school closures that will extend to at least May 5 as the District works to protect the community from COVID-19.

Vlogging may be taking Thomas out of her comfort zone, but it's undoubtedly providing comfort and incentive to students during uncertain times.

"The videos help me stay connected to the kids and it also keeps us both engaged," said Thomas, who is steadily populating her new YouTube channel, and has virtual guest speakers planned for her classes in the coming days.

"The most challenging part of remote learning is keeping students motivated, so we're all finding creative ways to keep those juices flowing."

Washington Elementary Principal Sandra Verduzco provides daily story time, reading to students on Facebook Live, while Rosa Park Principal Dawn Green shares assignments and dance moves.

Each of the District's 20 schools operates its own social media accounts where they provide parents with consistent updates and galvanize the community with Virtual Spirit Week challenges and other activities. Educators use Google Classroom to give assignments and hold class lessons via video chat.

Superintendent Gudiel R. Crosthwaite recently held a Zoom meeting with students from

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The **Lynwood Unified School District** is dedicated to offering students a world-class education to prepare them for success in college and career in the 21st century. Under its Achieving Greatness Initiative, the district is realigning all aspects of its organization to strengthen and expand instructional programs, enrichment and extracurricular activities, and support system for students and staff. For more information, visit www.lynwood.k12.ca.us.

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Firebaugh and Lynwood high schools to gauge how they are adjusting to remote learning as well as the new lifestyle restrictions brought on by COVID-19.

“Our students were very vocal about making sure they have all the tools they need, in terms of technology as well as school packets, to sustain their academic path,” Crosthwaite said. “They don’t want remote learning to compromise all the hard work they have put in to achieve their goals.”

Lynwood Unified is working to meet the additional technological needs of families and is expected to distribute around 3,500 new laptops to the community in the coming days.

Across the District, educators have taken a position of empathy with students – challenging them to continue excelling while creating a supportive environment. Lynwood Unified has established a Student Services hotline to provide socioemotional reassurance, and a COVID-19 response fund to assist families.

“Our educators have truly met the challenge of serving students and families during an enormous time of need,” LUSD President Gary Hardie Jr. said. “We will continue to leverage technology and compassion to ensure that the physical distance between us will not be a barrier to their success.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

032720_LUSD_TECH1: Abbott Elementary School students display art projects during a video conference class session.

032720_LUSD_TECH2: Hosler Middle School educators celebrate virtual Spirit Week.

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The mission of **Lynwood Unified School District**, the cultivator of innovative thinkers, is to ensure each student fearlessly achieves his or her highest academic and personal aspirations while contributing to the greater society through a unique system distinguished by:

- ★ People of great character who inspire and lead by example
- ★ The instilling of courage to be creative
- ★ The transformative uses of technology
- ★ Safe and clean environments
- ★ The honoring of all voices of our community