

Shout Outs

A big thanks for help with meals

This shout out goes to the community partners and staff who stepped up to deliver meals through the closure days from March 16 - 31.

- Karen Kolb-Schoeningh and friends from First Presbyterian Church/Open Door

- Aletha Bonebrake and friends from St. Stephens Episcopal Church

- Kelly Tanzey and friends from Soroptomist International of Baker County

- Pastor Ian Wolfe and friends from the First Lutheran Church

- Lea Gettle and friends from the Oregon Trail Electric Coop

- Maure Albert and friends with "JustServe"

- Baker School District staff, MaLena Wirth, Kim Virtue

- Baker School District Transportation Department

- Jessica Dalton and her awesome food service staff.

Together these good people delivered more than 5,600 meals over a 12-day period to families with youth 18 years and younger who typically depend on school meals to supplement their daily nutrition.

Thank you for helping Baker 5J comply with Governor Brown's directive to continue providing food service to families in our community. The citizens of Baker City have great hearts and are always ready to help in time of need. We appreciate you!

— Betty Palmer, assistant superintendent

Superior leadership

The District is so very fortunate to have a dedicated, extremely hardworking leader at the helm. Superintendent Mark Witty has spent countless hours working and worrying about our students, staff and the community. He has a heart of gold and genuinely cares for each of us. Thank you, Superintendent Witty, for your superior leadership during these difficult times. We appreciate you being at the helm, navigating the District through these uncharted waters.

— Cathy Martin

Quick response to child care need

On March 12, 2020, Governor Brown issued an Executive Order closing schools until April 28. This order placed an immediate burden on emergency workers and health care providers, as their jobs play an important role in helping maintain health and safety as we combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Baker 5J would like to extend grateful appreciation to Angela Lattin, Brooklyn Dean of Students, and Casandra Zellar, Baker County Child Care Resource and Referral, for their tremendous efforts in organizing, coordinating and launching an emergency childcare program for Baker families.

Cassandra's guidance throughout the application and organizational process was of critical importance in helping 5J respond to Governor Brown's directive while supporting current local providers who wished to continue childcare for their regular customers.

We now have two sections open at Brooklyn Primary with capacity

to serve up to 20 children; more sections are ready to be added as the closure continues.

Each childcare section is required to maintain consistency among itself - serving the same children and using the same workers per classroom space. Angela Lattin coordinates the staffing and scheduling while ensuring strict health protocols are followed.

In addition, we would like to thank these individuals for stepping up to help with the childcare program: Alexandra Wachtel, Rochelle Adams, Veronica Baxter, Mitch Stephens, and Amanda Washington

Special thanks to Baker 5J custodians Curtis Williams and Stuart Carpenter who ensure the classrooms being used are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected on a daily basis.

Thanks to all of you for efforts on behalf of kids and families during this time of heightened health concerns. We appreciate you!

— Betty Palmer, assistant superintendent

A true food hero

In my opinion, we throw the word hero around way too often. With the school closures across the state, our educators have been working extremely hard and I am very proud to be a part of this incredible group. Most recently, I have been able to spend some time working with Jessica Dalton feeding hundreds of hungry children daily.

I am in awe of how hard Jessica has been working and the creativity she presents daily to get the job done. My friend Jessica is a true hero during this difficult time. If you see her, please thank her for her contributions for our most vulnerable.

— Melody Webb

School board decides to postpone bond for now

In light of unknown economic impacts due to the coronavirus, district cancels bond request

Soon after the coronavirus pandemic caused the closure of schools and many businesses, the Baker School District board of directors made the decision to cancel the \$7.5 million bond request that would have been on the May ballot.

"With the financial burden caused by COVID-19, it would not be responsible to ask the community to give more," said Chris Hawkins, board chair.

Although it was a tough decision, he said it was the right one.

"So much work was put into this by the community, but we've got to postpone," he said.

The plan is to reassess the bond request at a later date, which has not yet been set.

"We're going to have to get to the other side of this pandemic," Hawkins said.

The proposed bond projects were going to address capacity issues and improve safety and security at all schools. These are still needed, said Superintendent Mark Witty.

"It was not an easy decision, but the board felt it was in the best interests of the community to postpone," Witty said.

If the bond had passed with voter approval, the district would have received a \$4 million state matching grant (OSCIM) to help pay for bond projects. Witty said the district expects to reapply for the matching grant when it resubmits the bond measure.