

This document was provided, as is, to the California Department of Education (CDE) by **Pioneer Union Elementary and the Kings County Office of Education**. This document is posted to the CDE website to meet the legal requirements of California *Education Code* Section 33009.5.

For more information regarding the content of this material, please contact the Charter Schools Division by phone at 916-322-6029 or by email at charters@cde.ca.gov.



Kings County Office of Education
Todd Barlow - County Superintendent of Schools

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Kings County Office of Education
Joy Santos, Assistant Superintendent

DATE: May 3, 2021

RE: Information Memo for Pioneer Union Elementary School District

1. **Charter District CAASPP:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent cancelation of the 2020 California Assessments of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), the most recent State assessments by which the Pioneer district can demonstrate comparability with similar districts is the 2019 administration of the CAASPP. The District has consistently ranked high in comparing students' performance in relation to other districts within Kings County.
2. **Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (LCP):** The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges to local educational agencies throughout the state. The Pioneer Union Elementary School District took significant measures to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of the students. The District addressed the following areas and supported these actions through the Learning Continuity Plan published in September of 2020 [Pioneer Union Elementary School District](#):
 - Continuity of learning
 - Ensuring access to devices and connectivity to support distance learning
 - Address learning loss
 - Provided social emotional supports
3. **Charter District Annual Site Visit:** The County Office of Education charter team visited Pioneer school sites on January 28, 2021.
4. **Success of the Charter District:** The Pioneer District Charter emphasizes the well-rounded education of our students. Through the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and consistent with its charter, the Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District has identified and implemented actions to provide the highest quality education for its students. The relative high performance of the Pioneer district is evidence of the effectiveness of the district's charter. Offering and delivering an exceptional educational program allows students and subgroups to perform at high levels. Additionally, a fundamental premise at the inception of California Charter Act governing charter schools was the opportunity charter schools and districts offered parents when making educational decisions for their children. The Pioneer Charter affords the opportunity, not only to residents of the district but to families from outside the district's boundaries, to access the high quality program offered within Pioneer District and, thereby, fulfilling a principle tenet of the California charter law.
5. Kings County Office of Education provides technical assistance to our Charter Districts throughout the year. Our county is relatively small and we work very closely with our districts. Some examples are:
 - LCAP oversight
 - Differentiated Assistance
 - Content Related Tier 1 Support
 - Foundational Assistance with Title programs
 - New Teacher/Administrator Induction
6. **County Office Acknowledgement:** The Kings County Office of Education has commendations for the educational programs offered at all three schools. All school sites have participated in MTSS professional development and have refined their practices to meet the social emotional needs of students. District and school staff are committed to professional learning, and have planned for training in trauma informed practices. The Associated Student Body (ASB) hosts activities to promote school connectedness. All school sites explored ways in which traditional activities could be held following safety protocols. As a charter, parental involvement is a high priority. This includes ongoing parental committees, parental education, and student events. Our team is fortunate to work and learn from the district's staff and students.

Response from Pioneer Union Elementary

Respectfully submitted,

Joy Santos
Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services
Kings County Office of Education
559-589-7068
joy.santos@kingscoe.org

CHARTER ANNUAL REPORT FEBRUARY 2021

PIONEER UESD RESPONSE AND ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges to local educational agencies throughout the State. The Pioneer Union Elementary School District took significant measures to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of the students we serve in a variety of ways. The District addressed the following areas and supported these actions through the Learning Continuity Plan published in September of 2020;

- Continuity of Learning
- Ensuring access to devices and connectivity to support distance learning
- Address learning loss
- Provided social emotional supports

CONTINUITY OF LEARNING BETWEEN IN-PERSON AND DISTANCE LEARNING

The Pioneer Union Elementary School District has invested to provide continuity of learning during distance learning through the following actions:

Access to Full Curriculum

- Each grade level/department has identified essential anchor standards to address to the greatest degree to ensure student learning and competency development based on grade level or content area standards.
- The use of standards based adopted programs are the basis of all core instruction delivered, providing consistency whether the method of delivery is paper packets, instruction delivered by virtual means, or in-person. The use of the core program as the basis of all instruction will assure a full curriculum and substantially similar quality regardless of the method of delivery.
- When developing lessons, grade level teams calculate synchronous and asynchronous instruction minutes required by Education Code.
- Grade level teams collaborate in the development of lesson plans focusing on the identified anchor standards to ensure continuity of instruction and delivery.
- Both common formative and summative assessments are used to assess students' acquisition of key skills and to adjust instruction based on the assessment results.

The use of the adopted program as the primary source of instruction provides continuity between the two models of delivery, distance learning and in-person instruction. The distinction will be a greater dependency to use the online resources within the adopted programs during distance learning as opposed to a greater use of print materials during in-person instruction.

Engagement

Additionally, the district developed a three tiered re-engagement plan for students who were not fully participating in distance learning. The re-engagement process involved parental outreach and the identification of barriers such as technology/connectivity issues that may be contributing to the lack of student engagement in daily live instruction. In each case, school staff works with the parent/s and student to address the identified issues.

ENSURING ACCESS TO DEVICES AND CONNECTIVITY TO SUPPORT DISTANCE LEARNING

The district has expanded one-to-one devices for every student in all grade levels. Additional devices were purchased to provide one-to-one devices to grades K-1 that did not have them prior to the pandemic. These devices were distributed to all students prior to the beginning of the school year. The district is also providing insurance for the devices for all students this school year. Families were notified of the device distribution by social media, district website, district phone call messaging system, text messages, and email. Families who were not available during the scheduled device pick-up event were contacted by district and school staff and were provided appointments to pick up devices for their students.

A system was established for families to report difficulties related to connectivity so that the issue could be resolved with minimal interference with the students' classwork. The system allowed for reporting of such issues via the District website, through school bulletins, and in person at the device pick-up event. Additionally, students who need technological support for district devices can access district technology staff by phone or through email to receive assistance. Families who report that they did not have internet services were provided with MiFi devices to ensure connectivity. Students who have unique circumstances including homelessness, low income families, and families in rural areas were addressed on a case-by-case basis and provided additional MiFi devices and other supports to mitigate connectivity issues. To improve connectivity, the district is invested in its digital infrastructure and also contributed to the upgrade to the County's LTE system.

LEARNING LOSS

The district has a schedule of a systematic cycle of assessments including initial screenings of all students learning. This will help determine the degree of learning loss or gaps due to the school closure in the 2019-2020 and 2020-21 school year. Additionally, the district has a schedule of summative assessments to monitor student learning throughout the current school year whether in-person or through distance learning. Teachers have a variety of formative assessment measures through curricular assessments and district assessment programs at their disposal that allow teachers to monitor student learning and areas of need on a routine basis. The LEA will use this information to help inform the implementation of intervention strategies to address students who may be struggling as a result of the challenges caused by the impacts of COVID-19 and ongoing distance learning.

Meeting the needs of Foster, English Learner and Low Income Students.

The unique needs of foster, English Learner and low income students were considered and prioritized when developing actions to mitigate the negative impacts on the education of our unduplicated students. The COVID-19 pandemic has created circumstances and needs that have disproportionate impacts on unduplicated students. They are the most likely to be impacted by the "digital divide", experience a disconnection from school, and to experience learning loss which may increase the achievement gap that, historically, these students experienced. The District and schools focused on the following areas to minimize the disproportionate impact on unduplicated students: bridging the digital divide, providing social and emotional supports, and addressing learning loss through additional supports (see small group cohorts below).

The unduplicated students were prioritized in the distribution devices and efforts to establish connectivity. In this, the district worked closely with our county office of education and other vendors to bring connectivity to those students who needed it. Social emotional supports for our unduplicated population

were prioritized, through our school counselor and psychologist. Additional support was provided to our English Learner Students by our bilingual community liaison.

Small Group Cohorts

The district implemented small group cohorts during the time in-person instruction was not provided for our students. Students receiving special education services, English Learners, and at risk students who were struggling during distance learning were the target groups for cohort instruction. Additionally, the district provided transportation to these students to remove barriers for participation.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS

All school sites have participated in MTSS professional development and have refined their practices to meet the social emotional needs of students. During the hybrid model, supports include structured lessons that support social emotional well-being, coping skills, peer support groups. In the hybrid model, siblings would be placed in similar cohorts to support their social emotional well-being. At the elementary sites, they have a structure system of PBIS supports for students including ways for students to reflect on behavior (Think Sheets), check-in/check-out systems for students to connect with an adult on a routine basis and form positive and trusted connections with school staff, behavior support plans for individual students as needed, and if needed a referral system to the district psychologist for more targeted support. At the middle school social-emotional support instruction is provided school-wide on a routine basis. Students have access to virtual clubs which provide social support and promote a positive sense of school community. The Associated Student Body (ASB) hosts activities to promote school connectedness. All school sites explored ways in which traditional activities could be held following safety protocols. These activities included drive through events, virtual Read Across America day, parent club events and fundraisers, and spirit wear sales to support the school and teachers. Additionally, students would have access to the school counselor if they felt they needed support.

Professional Development to Staff

The LEA provided professional development to the staff in partnership with the Diagnostic Center of Central California and as presented by District experts. Certificated staff also take annual professional training in suicide prevention and mandated child abuse reporting. Additionally, during our whole district professional development day, training on Mindfulness was offered providing strategies to deal with stressors. There is also a planned professional development in trauma informed practices for staff.

School sites use morning instruction time on Wednesdays to promote social-emotional wellbeing and address the feelings and emotions that students are experiencing. Teachers use the lessons and knowledge gained from the professional development titled "Connecting over COVID" created by Tulare COE to help students navigate these unusual times and their response to the adverse conditions presented by the pandemic. The district psychologist and school counselor are available to reach out to identified students. This service is provided one-on-one or in small group. Teachers may complete a referral form if they have concerns about a student. Students may also reach out directly to these staff members through their school's webpage. The middle school also has a Google Classroom group, known as the "Hub", set up for students through which they disseminate information for ways students can stay connected to school. Sites monitor students' online searches through a program called "Go Guardian" which provides

notices to staff when a student searches targeted topics such as suicide or other “red flag” searches that indicate a student may need some SEL support or other intervention. When these notices are triggered, the site administration follows up with students, parents, and appropriate staff.

Resources Provided to Students and Staff

The district psychologist and middle school counselor are available to all students during distance learning to support their mental health and social emotional well-being. The counselor and psychologist are creating web-based resources for students to access information and provide support during distance learning. Additionally, these staff members are creating online groups which students may join to promote social-emotional wellbeing and create a positive sense of community even during distance learning when in-person social interaction is limited. For staff, the health care company for qualifying staff members offers an Employee Assistance Program with free resources and support for staff who need mental health support and help with social-emotional well-being

Pioneer District Comparative Performance

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent cancelation of the 2020 California Assessments of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), the most recent State assessments by which the Pioneer district can demonstrate comparability with similar districts is the 2019 administration of the CAASPP. The District has consistently ranked high in comparing students’ performance in relation to other districts within Kings County.

2019 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress

The information in the charts below show the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standard on the 2019 CAASPP, comparing Pioneer’s performance to other elementary school districts in Kings County. When analyzing the performance of all students, Pioneer ranks 3rd in ELA and mathematics among county elementary school districts.

ELA	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard exceeded	% Met or Exceeded Standard	ELA Rank
Armona	44%	23%	24%	10%	33%	8
Central	21%	28%	32%	20%	52%	4
Hanford El.	31%	24%	31%	14%	45%	6
Island	13%	23%	35%	28%	64%	2
Kings River Hardwick	8%	19%	41%	32%	73%	1
Kit Carson	38%	26%	28%	8%	36%	7
Lakeside	46%	26%	18%	10%	28%	9
Lemoore El.	26%	25%	30%	19%	49%	5
Pioneer	18%	21%	35%	25%	61%	3
County	30%	24%	30%	16%	45%	*

MATH	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard exceeded	% Met or Exceeded Standard	Math Rank
Armona	52%	23%	17%	8%	25%	7
Central	25%	30%	26%	19%	45%	4
Hanford El.	34%	28%	21%	17%	38%	6
Island	17%	28%	27%	28%	55%	2
Kings River Hardwick	13%	24%	31%	32%	63%	1
Kit Carson	47%	32%	15%	6%	21%	8
Lakeside	52%	29%	14%	5%	19%	9
Lemoore El.	30%	29%	22%	18%	40%	5
Pioneer	21%	31%	26%	22%	48%	3
County	39%	28%	20%	13%	33%	*

SUBGROUP 2019 CAASPP COUNTY/DISTRICT PERFORMANCE

The table below records the percentage of each subgroup within the district that met or exceeded standard compared to Kings County performance on the CAASPP. All significant subgroups performed higher in ELA and mathematics when compared to county-wide performance with the exception of Filipino Students in ELA and SWD who performed two percentage points below County-Wide performance.

Subgroup	Achievement Level	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
		County-Wide	District	County-Wide	District
All Students	Standard Met or Exceeded	37%	61%	33%	48%
Black or African American	Standard Met or Exceeded	35%	49%	23%	41%
Asian	Standard Met or Exceeded	63%	84%	54%	75%
Filipino	Standard Met or Exceeded	75%	70%	64%	65%
Hispanic or Latino	Standard Met or Exceeded	40%	53%	28%	39%
White	Standard Met or Exceeded	61%	70%	48%	56%
EL	Standard Met or Exceeded	10%	21%	10%	19%
RFEP	Standard Met or Exceeded	55%	63%	37%	46%
SED	Standard Met or Exceeded	38%	53%	27%	37%
SWD	Standard Met or Exceeded	14%	16%	11%	9%

Success of the Charter

The Pioneer District Charter emphasizes the well-rounded education of our students. Through the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and consistent with its charter, the Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District has identified and implemented actions to provide the highest quality education for its students. The relative high performance of the Pioneer district is evidence of the effectiveness of the district's charter. Offering and delivering an exceptional educational program allows students and subgroups to perform at high levels. Additionally, a fundamental premise at the inception of California Charter Act governing charter schools was the opportunity charter schools and districts offered parents when making educational decisions for their children. The Pioneer Charter affords the opportunity, not only to residents of the district but to families from outside the district's boundaries, to access the high quality program offered within Pioneer District and, thereby, fulfilling a principle tenet of the California charter law.



Addendum to the February, 2021 Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District Annual Report

Teachers at Pioneer Union Elementary School District regularly assess student progress and use the data to support children and accelerate their learning. During the 2019-2020 school year Pioneer evaluated student learning progress using multiple measures including local reading assessments using Fountas and Pinnell, local District Benchmark Assessments in both the areas of math and English Language Arts (ELA), and universal screening tools through FastBridge. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, Pioneer District closed its campuses for in-person instruction starting on March 16, 2020. Some planned assessments, including the State Smarter Balanced Assessment, were not held during the Spring closure of 2020.

Within the first weeks of school students in grades TK-5 were assessed in ELA using the universal screener, FastBridge, and the more in depth reading assessment, Fountas and Pinnel. Assessment data was reviewed by Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams, areas of need identified, and student groupings and supports planned. District universal screening assessments were scheduled to be given twice more during the year, but were only able to be implemented once more at the midway point of the school year. The spring universal screening assessment was canceled due to the school site closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Benchmark assessments were given at the end of the first and second trimesters. The district uses the local assessment data to inform daily instruction and intervention programs. Pioneer staff used assessment data to create intervention groups and offer consistent instruction to support students in areas of need. Teachers also assessed students with both formative and summative tests in core curricular areas during the regular school day, which provided more data for teachers to determine gaps and areas of need within a child's learning.

Middle school students in grades 6-8 were assessed using the universal screener FastBridge in ELA at the beginning of the year. Assessment data was reviewed by teachers during PLCs and areas of student need are determined. District Benchmark assessments were given twice during the year at the end of the first and second trimesters. Based on student assessment data and a complete review of student performance in mathematics, students had the opportunity to participate in remediation courses in Math. ELA teachers were provided with instructional aides to help support students who needed additional assistance in English. Additionally, students were also given both formative and summative assessment in core curricular areas within the school day, which provided more data for teachers to determine gaps and areas of need within a student's learning.

On the Fall District Benchmark Assessments, the percentage of students who met or exceeded the standards was as follows:

Grade level	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
Percentage of Students who Met or Exceeded the grade level standards in ELA	52.4%	17.0%	44.2%	40.3%	41.9%	15.5%	17.0%
Percentage of Students who Met or Exceeded the grade level standards in Math	70.3%	14.2%	41.3%	50.0%	40.6%	5.3%	21.3%

On the Winter District Benchmark Assessments, the percentage of students who met or exceeded the standards was as follows:

Grade level	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
Percentage of Students who Met or Exceeded the grade level standards in ELA	46.3%	35.1%	49.4%	43.5%	63.0%	17.6%	46.7%
Percentage of Students who Met or Exceeded the grade level standards in Math	47.0%	36.0%	40.5%	60.4%	51.9%	27.4%	23.6%

Third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades all showed marked increase in their benchmark scores between the fall and the winter assessments in English Language Arts. Students in grades three, five, six, seven, and eight showed improvement in Math from the Fall to Winter assessments. These increases demonstrated positive growth performance to infer how students would have performed on the Spring 2020 CAASPP assessments.