

## Local school districts to offer 'grab-n-go' meals during closure

[Kyra Haas](#), Visalia Times-Delta Published 8:00 p.m. PT March 16, 2020 | Updated 2:20 p.m. PT March 17, 2020

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Delia Scott, left, and other cafeteria workers at Visalia Unified's Food Production Center prepare "grab-n-go" meals on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 for students during the school shut down. (Photo: Ron Holman)

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At 5 a.m. Tuesday morning, 25 food safety-certified staff started assembling 2,500 sack lunches to hand out to students at sites across Visalia Unified School District on Wednesday.

Schools in Visalia and Tulare, as well as in some neighboring districts, have closed their doors through mid-April in response to the COVID-19 virus. Many schools across California have also shuttered temporarily.

In the meantime, VUSD, Tulare City, Tulare Joint Union High and other closed school districts are offering grab-n-go meal services at various school sites beginning Wednesday.

A list of meal service sites in Visalia, Tulare and surrounding districts can be found at the end of this article.

The new system is a challenge, the likes of which nutritional services director Regina Ocampo said she hasn't experienced in her 19 years on the job.

"All districts are doing it, so product is in backorder," she said. "We were just told Fresno Unified (School District) took all the sandwiches we wanted, so we're going to switch to another sandwich."

The districts will offer free breakfast and lunch for children ages 1 to 18, five days a week. The services will run through April 3. April 6–13 is spring break for all three districts. Most closed schools currently plan to resume classes April 14.

The number of meals VUSD will need on hand is a moving target, and Ocampo said staff will adjust based on how many people show up once the meal service starts.

"It's hard to predict how much we need," she said.



Sara Brumley, left, and other cafeteria workers at Visalia Unified's Food Production Center prepare "grab-n-go" meals on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 for students during the school shut down. (Photo: Ron Holman)

Delia Scott stepped away from the frenzy inside VUSD's food production center for a moment Tuesday. She sees the students at Valley Oak Middle School every day as a cafeteria site lead, and she said she's worried about them while schools here are shut down.

"They're like our family," she said. "I'm just happy to do this, to help our community."

Valley Oak is one of more than two dozen grab-n-go sites in the district. There are 16 school sites, as well as a number of bus stops along more rural routes, Ocampo said.

"Both lunch and breakfast (for the next day) will be available for pick up at the same time, in order to prevent the need for families to return to the pickup location twice," according to a VUSD news release.

Children or teens can pick up meals without a parent present, but parents must be accompanied by their children in order to pick up meals. Children do not have to attend the school where they pick up their meals.

VUSD will also have packets of resources and activities for 15 days of at-home learning for students or parents to grab at its meal service sites. The resources are for TK through 12th grade and will also be online.

"Because our curriculum staff worked through the weekend and very long hours yesterday, we'll have packets of material going out with our meal delivery and at the school sites," VUSD Superintendent Tamara Ravalín said.



Violet Chavez, center, and other cafeteria workers at Visalia Unified's Food Production Center prepare "grab-n-go" meals on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 for students during the school shut down. (Photo: Ron Holman)

## Visalia

The VUSD grab-n-go meal service pick-up school sites will operate from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesday to April 3.

- Annie R. Mitchell Elementary School
- Cottonwood Creek Elementary School
- Bus stop at Cameron and Oakview
- Divisadero Middle School
- Elbow Creek Elementary School
- Four Creeks Elementary School
- Bus stop at Douglas and Gowdy
- Global Learning Charter School
- Goshen Elementary School
- Houston Elementary School
- Ivanhoe Elementary School
- Linwood Elementary School
- Manuel F. Hernandez Elementary School
- Mineral King Elementary School
- Valley Oak Middle School
- Veva Blunt Elementary School
- Washington Elementary School
- Willow Glenn Elementary School

Bus stop grab-n-go meal service sites will operate for four hours after regular morning bus stops from Wednesday to April 3.

- All regular bus stops for Annie R. Mitchell
- All regular bus stops for Elbow Creek
- All regular bus stops for Goshen
- All regular bus stops for Ivanhoe
- All regular bus stops for Linwood

## Tulare

Breakfast and lunch will be served at all TCSD elementary and middle school sites from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., according to Alvaro Costa, coordinator for TCSD's nutrition services.

Meals will also be served at the following high schools from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday to April 3, according to TJUHSD Food Services Director Janet Stephens:

- Mission Oak High School
- Tulare Union High School
- Tulare Western High School

## Exeter

Exeter grab-n-go meal service pick-up spots will operate 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesday to April 3.

- Rocky Hill Elementary School
- Lincoln Elementary School

## Farmersville

Farmersville grab-n-go meal service pick-up spots will operate 11 a.m. to noon Wednesday to April 3.

- Farmersville High School
- Farmersville Junior High
- Hester Elementary
- Freedom Elementary
- Snowden Elementary

## Cutler-Orosi

Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District grab-n-go meal service pick-up spots will operate 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday to April 3.

- Orosi High School student parking lot
- Golden Valley Elementary, near cafeteria loading zone
- Cutler Elementary School



Violet Chavez, right, and other cafeteria workers at Visalia Unified's Food Production Center prepare "grab-n-go" meals on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 for students during the school shut down. (Photo: Ron Holman)

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