The Office of Communications & Community Engagement at Poway Unified School District shared the following samples of their messaging and information efforts during and after the 2014 Bernardo Wildfire.

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Bernardo Wildfire  
PUSD Emergency Operations Center  
Key Points

**Tuesday, May 13:**

- Fire observed behind Del Norte High School at 10:45; reported to Superintendent and LSS.
- District EOC members convene, begin work, and deploy staff to sites.
- In response to broadcast and online information received re: wind direction and weather conditions, and communication with local authorities, EOC directs transportation and school site staff to evacuate Stone Ranch, Willow Grove and Del Sur Elementary School students and staff to evacuation/reunification sites at Rancho Bernardo, Poway and Westview High Schools.
- Because of changes in fire conditions, law enforcement orders Westview evacuation/reunification site to be relocated to Torrey Pines HS.
- 15 buses initially deployed for evacuations; followed by the full PUSD fleet of 121 buses.
- 2600 staff and students evacuated and relocated.
- Students at all west side schools, including ESS, Pre-school, ASES, BLAST, and PEARL Center are released in response to Law Enforcement notification.
- Mutual aid for transportation requested so that regular school-to-home transportation can occur.
- Buses provided by San Diego USD, San Marcos USD, and Vista USD.
- All after-school activities and programs are cancelled.
- All west side schools are checked and secured; every student and staff member is accounted for.
- RBHS and PHS are designated official evacuation shelters by Red Cross.
- Coordinated operations begin between law enforcement, fire departments, and PUSD.
- PUSD EOC is given Regional Operations status, allowing the EOC to continue operations throughout the week to assess and respond to situations as they arise.
**Wednesday, May 14:**

- All school sites and District offices are open.
- Working in conjunction with SDCOE and 41 County LEA’s, the decision is made to close PUSD schools on Thursday in response to poor air quality, potential wind shifts and locations of current fire activity, and in order to reduce county-wide electrical and water usage.
- All after-school programs and activities are cancelled.
- All District facilities are closed to outside reservations/use.
- All scheduled field trips within the County are cancelled.

**Thursday, May 15 and Friday, May 16:**

- All school sites and District offices are closed.
- Staff members, including EOC, are contacted to work on an as-needed basis.
- Working in conjunction with SDCOE and 41 County LEA’s, the decision is made to close PUSD schools on Friday.
- All after-school programs and activities are cancelled.
- All District facilities are closed to outside reservations/use.
- All scheduled field trips within the County are cancelled.

**Saturday, May 16:**

- School sites and District facilities reopen to limited outside use.
- Specific in-County events (RBHS and WV proms) are held.

**Monday, May 19:**

- All school sites and District offices are open.
- All after-school programs and activities resume.
- All school sites and District facilities reopen to full outside reservation/use.
- All scheduled field trips within the County resume.

**Communication:**

- Blackboard Connect system is utilized to keep staff, parents and students apprised of school and District offices closures and re-openings.
- On-going, timely two way communication with staff, students, parents and the public is maintained through web, Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, Blackboard Connect.
- Multiple media releases are released and on-air interviews given.
PUSD Transportation Alert

Dear PUSD Families,

As a precaution due to the wild fire in our area, several schools in the District have been evacuated. At this time our District busses are transporting students at the affected schools to other sites where they will be picked up. If your student rides a bus from school to home, their bus will be delayed today. Once all evacuations have taken place, normal bus routes will resume. If possible, we recommend you pick up your students from school today as the delays could be lengthy. We will continue to update you as more information becomes available. For the latest updates, please follow PUSD on Twitter and/or Facebook.

Agenda Talking Points - 5/14/14

Reasons for closing:

1. Threat of new fires
2. Air quality
3. Smoke - damage, limited visibility
4. Out-Of-District bus routes impacted
5. Staff needing to leave school sites to deal with personal home evacuations
6. Traffic and travel route closures impeding staff commuting
7. Possibility of power outages.
8. Transportation is stretched thin. All buses in closed or non-impacted districts could be used for transportation in heavily impacted districts.
9. Transportation of all N. County districts of their NPS students to programs in the South county.
10. If closed, we can provide resources for other agencies/organizations in our communities.
11. RCS heavily taxed - shut down for 1.5 hours on Wednesday.
12. AP exams - "rescheduling allowed for school closures based on natural disasters"
Good Afternoon, this is your Superintendent with an important message for all PUSD Staff Members.

All schools and District Offices in the Poway Unified School District will be closed tomorrow, Thursday, May 15th. We are currently evaluating and monitoring the situation on a day-by-day basis. You will receive additional communication tomorrow regarding our decisions for Friday.

Since yesterday, there have been an increased number of fires reported in our surrounding communities. In an abundance of caution, and in response to this increased intensity and range of fires, we have made this decision to close schools and District Offices and facilities tomorrow, May 15th.

The majority of school districts in North County will also be closed.

- All Members of the Emergency Operations Center should report to the District Office tomorrow at 8:00 a.m.

- The Facilities Staff; Transportation Staff; Twin Peaks Center Staff; District Office Staff and all school site staff should not report to work unless you receive communication from your supervisors to the contrary.

Please continue to monitor our website, Facebook and Twitter accounts, and your email and phone for updates through the rest of the week.

Thank you for your continued cooperation. I extend my thoughts to everyone in our community and the surrounding communities impacted by these fires.

Please be safe.

Superintendent
Poway Unified School District
Families – Fire Closure Message 5/15/14

May 15, 2014

Dear PUSD Families,

This is your Superintendent with an important message.

All schools and District Offices in the Poway Unified School District will be closed tomorrow, Friday, May 16th. Pending additional fire concerns, all schools and offices will re-open on Monday, May 19th.

Because of the continuing strain on water and power resources, and concerns about air quality, the majority of school districts in North County will also be closed. Each school district in the County will be making its own announcement, but Poway Unified is closed tomorrow, Friday, May 16th.

All CIF practices and competitions, countywide, are cancelled for Friday. The decision regarding Saturday practices and competitions is still pending and our high schools will be notified tomorrow.

All after-school activities at all school sites are also cancelled on Friday. However, the out-of-county field trips scheduled for Friday and Saturday will still take place. You will receive additional information from your school site regarding these events.

Please continue to monitor our website, Facebook and Twitter accounts, and your email and phone for updates.

I want to thank students, families, staff members and the community for your continued cooperation and send my thoughts and prayers to those of you who have lost your homes or been evacuated.

And special thanks go to our firefighters and law enforcement officers for their tremendous efforts to contain these wildfires.

Superintendent

Poway Unified School District
Wildfire Report to the Board – 5-19-14

The past several days have been challenging ones for our District. As a community that suffered significant damage during the 2007 Witch Creek fires, we understand the destruction these wildfires bring. Just as in 2007, employees across our District have worked collaboratively this past week to ensure the safety of all students, staff, community members, and facilities.

I would like to extend special thanks and recognition to the following individuals and departments:

- **The Transportation Department** who carried out the intricate schedule for evacuation and relocation of students and staff.

- **The teachers, Instructional Assistants, and office, ESS, PSS, ACES and Pearl Center staff** who worked collaboratively to ensure student safety and well-being during the initial school site evacuations.

- **The staff at Westview High School, Rancho Bernardo High School, and Poway High School** who welcomed evacuated students and staff, assisted with student pick-up, and stayed on site until all students were reunited with their families.

- **Our Custodians** who ensured facilities were shut down and secured during the days the District was closed, and prepared sites to reopen and receive students and staff today.

- **The District Emergency Operations Committee** who helped to organize and coordinate all of these efforts.

I also want to thank:

- **The San Diego Unified, Vista and San Marcos School Districts** who provided buses so that we could conduct our school evacuations and maintain our regular after-school transportation routes.

- **Torrey Pines High School** who welcomed PUSD students and staff after buses headed to Westview High were rerouted by law enforcement.

And finally, I would like to thank:

- **Our students** for their exemplary behavior and cooperation during this very stressful time, and **our parents** for their patience, assistance, and support. They have given new meaning to the District’s goal of “Parents as Partners.”

I have no doubt PUSD will continue to work as a community in the days ahead, as we resume our work of teaching and learning and as we reach out to impacted families in Carlsbad, Camp Pendleton, Pala, Escondido, Fallbrook and Oceanside.

I remain proud to be a member of this remarkable community.

Sincerely,
Superintendent
Poway Unified School District
Bernardo Wildfire Thank You

“We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives.”

~ John F. Kennedy

The past several days have been challenging ones for our District. As a community that suffered significant damage during the 2007 Witch Creek fires, we understand the destruction that wildfires can bring. But just as in 2007, the Bernardo wildfire has provided the Poway Unified School District community with the opportunity to work collaboratively and make a difference in each other’s lives.

It is important to me and to the Board of Education that I take the time to recognize and thank those individuals, both inside and outside the PUSD community, whose actions have made a critical difference.

We extend sincere thanks to:

**The District Emergency Operations Committee** who organized the timely evacuation of students and staff from three of our west side elementary schools.

**The Transportation Department** who carried out the intricate schedule for evacuation and relocation of students and staff.

**The staff, students and parents at Willow Grove, Del Sur and Stone Ranch Elementary Schools** who worked collaboratively to ensure student safety and well-being.

**The staff at Westview High School, Rancho Bernardo High School, and Poway High School** who welcomed evacuated students and staff, assisted with student pick-up, and stayed on site until all students were reunited with their families.

We also wish to thank:

**The San Diego Unified, Vista and San Marcos School Districts** who provided buses so that we could conduct our school evacuations and maintain our regular after-school transportation routes.

**Torrey Pines High School** who welcomed PUSD students and staff after buses headed to Westview High were rerouted by law enforcement.

I have no doubt PUSD will continue to work as a community in the days ahead, as we reach out to assist impacted families in Carlsbad, Camp Pendleton, Pala and Oceanside. I remain proud to be a member of this remarkable community.

Sincerely,
Superintendent
Poway Unified School District