

JESUP COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



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Dear Jesup Parents, Students, and Staff,

I hope everyone is doing well as we continue to work through these challenging and uncertain times. As many of you may have already heard, Governor Reynolds announced today that Iowa schools will be closed for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. While many of us were expecting this as a likely possibility, it has now become a reality. With this reality, we now must continue to plan and adjust as we move forward. There are many emotions that we all are feeling from shock to sadness to anxiety to fear. One thing that I can provide for certainty is that the faculty and staff of our school district remain committed to ensuring that all our students continue to have the opportunities to learn and that you as parents are supported as we move forward. While there will be many questions and additional decisions that will need to be made in the upcoming days and weeks, I want to provide you with updates on as much information as we do know as of today.

Continuous Learning Plan- Schools are expected to continue with their established Continuous Learning Plan through the regularly scheduled end of the school year. We, as a district, will continue to provide these learning opportunities to all of our students and families. Now is more important than ever for you to make sure to engage in these opportunities in order to ensure that as much learning is captured as possible. Our teachers, in working with their building principals, will continue to work to provide these outstanding opportunities as we move forward through the remainder of the year. The number of students engaged so far has been great and teachers will continue to monitor and record the number of students who are participating.

Graduation Requirements- The Department of Education continues to provide updated guidance on earning credit and graduation requirements. The Department of Education has waived graduation requirements that may have been impacted by the COVID-19 school closures. Mr. Rea has communicated these specific waivers to seniors and their parents earlier this week. For all students, we will continue to provide as much flexibility and latitude to ensure that students earn their credits and advance in their education.

Athletics- As a part of the extended school closure, it was also announced today that all spring sports are canceled. We understand this is a very disappointing decision for many of our student athletes, parents, and coaches, but it was made in the best interest of the health and safety of all participants,

coaches, and spectators. There has not been a final decision on the summer sports seasons but the Governor did say that a decision on summer sports would be made prior to June 1st. We share in your disappointment in the loss of this season but we are hopeful that the summer season will be able to operate at least in some capacity. Mr. Smeins, our athletic director, will be providing additional updates to coaches and athletes as more information is provided.

Prom- We had made the decision to postpone prom from its original date to a new date of May 2nd. Unfortunately with the closure of schools through the end of the year, prom will now be canceled. We had hoped that we would be able to hold this event in some capacity but regretfully we no longer see an option in holding this.

Graduation- Graduation is the capstone event of a student's PS-12th educational career and an important time as students transfer into adulthood. With school being closed for the remainder of the year, this is a very important event that we need to plan for. I have been in communication with Mr. Rea as well as with many school districts in the state on different options that we have to consider on how to still honor our graduates. There are currently many ideas out there from a virtual ceremony, limited in-person ceremony, to delaying the ceremony to a later date. We will continue to evaluate all options as well as consider the broader guidance on what is allowed for public gatherings and hopefully be able to make a final decision in the upcoming weeks. Regardless, we will make every effort to honor our graduates in a way that they deserve.

Pick up of Student Items- We have received a number of questions already on when students will be able to gather their supplies from their desks and lockers. We will definitely allow and arrange for this to happen, but with the Governor's added restrictions yesterday for Region 6, which includes our school district, we will not be allowing this prior to April 30th while these restrictions are in place. If there is an emergency item, we will make arrangements to have that item delivered if possible. For most items however we will arrange a time, date, and process once restrictions in our region have been eased.

Employee Pay- Earlier this month the school board approved through resolution that all employees will be paid through the end of the school year based on their current contract and hours. The school board was intentional in this language in order to prepare for the likelihood that school would be closed for the remainder of the year. I just want to reassure all of our employees this resolution is still in effect and all current employees will continue to be paid through the end of the 2019-20 school year contracts.

While there is a lot of information in this update, we will likely be receiving additional guidance in the coming days on how school districts are to operate as we move forward. As through this entire process, information does change rapidly and as a district we may have to adjust and pivot on how we make decisions quickly. We appreciate your patience and understanding and we will continue to do our best to keep you updated as quickly and as regularly as possible. As I close, I would encourage you to continue to take care of yourself and those around you and stay J-Hawk Strong! If you have any questions on any of this or at any time as we move forward, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We are here to help and support in any ways that we are able to.

Thank you and take care,

Nathan Marting, Superintendent