

April 3, 2020

College Community Families,

Yesterday, Governor Reynolds extended the current school closure period through April 30, 2020. This situation is unprecedented and we thank you for your ongoing patience and trust. We often find out about state-level decisions that impact our schools at the same time as our families.

As we face the reality of this extended school closure, we continue to focus on our three priorities and we will reevaluate in light of these new circumstances. Below are important updates on our first priority which is particularly relevant as we move forward. Please understand that there is much yet to be determined and we await additional guidance from state officials. I'm incredibly proud of our staff and what they have been able to accomplish in a few short weeks. I'm confident this dedication will continue throughout this extended closure.

Priority #1: Support our students, families, staff, and our greater community through this crisis.

- As a school district, we are committed to prioritizing the emotional wellbeing of our students and supporting their mental health. Feelings of anxiety and loss are to be expected during this uncertain time. School staff will continue to reach out to children and families during the entire closure period, but please contact your child's school counselor for additional support. We have access to community resources and can increase the frequency of communication from school staff to your child and family if needed.
- CCSD leaders have been working closely with area districts and the Iowa Department of Education to address how this school closure impacts a variety of topics that are of particular concern for high school students including graduation requirements, credit recovery, Advanced Placement courses, and concurrent enrollment courses. Decisions on some of these topics have been made and we will continue to make plans for others. We have provided additional information regarding these decisions to families who are affected and will continue to do this in a timely manner.
- The Iowa Department of Education is currently creating an expedited process for schools to complete that will allow us to provide online education for our students. Once that application is available, we will complete it immediately. This will allow us to transition our optional learning opportunities to some *required* learning experiences. The plan that we are currently implementing meets the provisions for continuous learning and, therefore, we are not required to make up the days missed prior to April 30th in the summer months. More information will be shared in the weeks ahead.
- We can assure you that our plan for supporting the academic growth of all students in all grades, and in particular in grades 9th-12th, will allow for maximum flexibility and we will not make any plans that will jeopardize students' academic standing, progress toward graduation, or post-secondary goals as we create our online learning plan.
- Through our weekly contacts with families, we are determining students who do not have internet access at home and will make plans to support these needs on a case-by-case basis as we continue to refine our plan for continuous learning.
- Copies of optional learning activities are available for all grade levels at CCSD-sponsored meal sites. We are doing our best to keep these packets available. Please take only what you need. We appreciate the cooperation of the businesses in our communities where we have added copies available for pick-up during their hours of operation:
 - **Fairfax:** Casey's General Store, 65 Williams Boulevard

- **Walford:** BP Gas Station, 200 Highway 151 East
- **Swisher and Shueyville:** BP Gas Station, 2722 120th Street / Interstate 380 Exit 10

- Our Grab N Go Meals program continues to feed a growing number of area children. To date, we have served over 16,000 meals. We continue to advocate for additional meal site approval in the Cedar Rapids area and our surrounding communities. At the time of this writing, we have not yet received federal approval to offer meal sites in Fairfax, Walford, Swisher, or Shueyville. We sincerely thank our food service employees and staff volunteers for making this program possible. Please note: **Meals will not be served on Friday, April 10th.**

- We are currently experiencing the effects of a nationwide shortage of items to support our Grab N Go Meals program. We will continue to search for available supplies and make the most of what we have now for as long as we are able.

While it is now clear that our goal of reopening school on April 13 is not possible, the College Community School District continues to be a dedicated part of the prevention, response, and recovery efforts. We firmly believe that students and families need the routine, structure, and learning opportunities that school provides, as well as the connection to their teachers and classmates. At the same time, we must do all that we can to preserve the health and safety of our community.

As Governor Reynolds stated in her press conference yesterday in reference to schools mobilizing for continuous learning during this school closure: "We can't let perfect be the enemy of good." While we know we won't be *perfect*, I am extraordinarily optimistic about our teachers' and administrators' abilities to provide educational experiences for students in non-traditional ways in the coming months. We look forward to rising to this challenge together!

In Service,

Doug Wheeler, PhD
Superintendent of Schools