



March 18, 2020

### **Today's Update**

As you have likely heard, Governor Tony Evers announced Tuesday afternoon that Wisconsin's K-12 schools are now closed "for the duration of the public health emergency." We do not know how long that may be. Regardless of the length of closure, the staff of the West Bend School District continues to work day and night to support the needs of our students and community.

We know that many people depend on our district for basic needs and we are committed to ensuring as little interruption for our community as possible in light of the unprecedented situation our nation is facing.

In the past few days the district has prioritized the following:

- Given away hundreds of meals to students
- Distributed hundreds of Chromebooks and hotspots to families of children in grades 5-12 with no access to the internet or technology
- Coordinated the distribution of necessary student medications to families that had been stored in our school health clinics
- Provided daily communication with the staff and families
- Conducted ongoing work to coordinate a *meaningful* distance learning program, which is slated to start mid next week (see below for more details)
- Adjusted our plans accordingly each time the state, Centers for Disease Control, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, or Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department officials have updated and changed the conditions we are required to operate under

The mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing of our students and staff is our top priority during this pandemic. Please know that our school counselors are continuously checking and responding to email during the school closure. Students and families should not hesitate to reach out to their school counselor for needed supports.

Furthermore, our family-school liaisons and other pupil services staff are continuing to coordinate our efforts behind the scenes to provide resources for families who need them. While the schools are closed, our commitment to protecting the wellbeing of our students continues unabated.

### **Communication from Teachers**

The district is working hard to ensure clarity and consistency in the messages you receive. For that reason, our teachers have been instructed to respond to all individual emails but to refrain from sending group emails to their classes for a few days. This guarantees that every family receives reliable and non-contradictory information from the West Bend School District. Teachers will soon be given the go-ahead to reach out to their classes as a group.

### **Phone Calls**

Our daily phone calls to provide a reminder of an email coming to your in-box have set off “scam” alerts on some family cell phones. Your cell phone may say “Scam Likely” when the call comes through. We will decrease our phone calls, so please continue to check your email or the [WBSD district webpage](#) daily. We are making every effort to send the email between 2-4 p.m. everyday.

### **Distance Learning**

Like all other school districts throughout the county, our Curriculum & Instruction team has been working to coordinate our distance learning program for students. Teachers will be supporting your child remotely through the distance learning. We appreciate your patience as we organize this endeavor to shift our instructional approach to a distance learning format. We now anticipate distance learning beginning mid-next-week. Continue to check your email daily for updates on which day next week this programming will begin.

1. Our district provides a Chromebook to all students in grade 5-9 for use during the school year. Additionally, students in grades 10-12 have always had access to a Chromebook if they needed one. While our elementary age students have numerous electronic devices at their disposal in class, our practice has not been to send those devices home with students. We are currently evaluating the resources and feasibility of handing out devices to elementary students.
2. The distance learning for all grade levels will be provided electronically via email. If a printed copy of the materials are needed, please contact your building principal.
  - a. Students in grades K-4 will need to print out learning activities. Teachers will be able to support students remotely during this time.

[CLICK HERE](#) for a list of contact information for principals.

Thank you again for your continued understanding of this situation and the challenges it presents.

Don Kirkegaard  
Superintendent