



Knob Noster R-VIII School District

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Dr. Jerrod Wheeler, Superintendent of Schools

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Our Mission Is Student Success

Date: March 19, 2020
To: Knob Noster Public Schools Community
From: Superintendent Jerrod Wheeler
RE: Covid-19 Update (9) – State MAP / EOC Testing Canceled

Dear Knob Noster Public Schools Community,

As we continue to negotiate the Covid-19 issue, I am writing with updated information. I want to first say thank you to the nearly 650 people who have responded to our planning survey. This data is very valuable to our planning process. You may now access answers to the questions you provided on our Coronavirus tab at www.knr8.net. If you have not yet completed the survey, we encourage you to do so.

Current Survey Data Points

89% indicate a willingness to put forward a good faith effort to support virtual learning – 1% indicate they are not. (others undecided)

93% indicate they have childcare options in place with 7% indicating they do not

73% support moving forward with virtual learning, 13% are undecided, and 7% want to end the year now

3% respond as not having internet access, and of that 3% almost all have cellular access – See Hot Spots below

150 families have indicated they will participate in the food service program, with a 475 meal count

Operational Parameters Moving Forward

I am closely monitoring the curve trajectory of Covid-19 cases and deaths in our country. We will continue to monitor that situation and that data will inform our plan and response.

As we move forward, I am setting some very clear parameters as it relates to our communications, plans, actions and responses to this situation. Simply stated, our district team will be tasked with reducing stress, de-escalating tension, and providing all services to our students and community in a manner that does not compound the stress of this crisis. We are all likely aware of the impact that stress has on susceptibility to illness. Accordingly, for our staff, students, and parents our way forward will be attentive to reducing stress. Rest assured, we will hold the health and wellness of our students, employees, and community as our first priority as we move forward with all services. We encourage each of you to embrace this same approach with your children and within your household. We hope we bring a level of comfort knowing our team is here to support you and your family.

At this time, we are staying with the previously communicated plan which calls for our students' Spring Break to extend through next week, during which time our teachers will prepare and communicate our plans for delivery of virtual instruction. Student virtual instruction will begin on Monday, March 30. This date may be delayed based on the trajectory of the virus at that time.

Virtual Education Commitments

There are many questions about what this virtual approach will look like. Our principals, teachers, and support staff will tackle that next week and will communicate this out, once these plans formalize and finalize. Again, a focus on low stress, convenience, and flexibility will serve as the foundation.

- *Academic focus first, with emphasis on social engagement, fun, and providing experiences that are as normal as possible
- *Flexible and/or convenient instructional periods, flexible structure, etc, will be considered by all teachers.
- *Tiered levels of engagement/time based on age of students
- *Focus on core academics (Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Sciences) first, followed by electives and supplemental
- *Collaboration among teachers/courses to the fullest extent possible

State Testing / Promotion / Credits / GPA

As anticipated, we learned a few moments ago that all State-level MAP and EOC tests are cancelled for this year. This is one of several decisions made today by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the State of Missouri in an effort to ease burdens during this time. We fully expect additional communication addressing and confirming that all students in will be allowed to progress to the appropriate grade level next year. The district will provide details on how grades, GPA, and credits will be assigned once we align all details. We do not yet know if or how EOC tests will be made up.

Make Up Hours / Days

DESE also informed us this evening that all hours / days missed during this virus situation will not be required to be made up. Accordingly, we will plan to end the school year no later than Memorial Day, and will plan on a routine Summer School schedule in June, if the health of the country allows. We may look to extend Summer School to the extent possible in an effort to make up for lost time. Look for specific details once we are on the other side of the virus curve.

Class of 2020 Graduation

Although we have addressed this situation prior, we fielded many questions regarding commencement. At this time, we plan to hold commencement in some form, with our hope being the health of the country will allow for a routine ceremony. If not, we will find some way to create this important and memorable experience for our Seniors, parents, and the friends/family/community who have supported their accomplishments. We will wait as late as possible to deviate from that traditional event.

Internet Access

As a reminder, information related to internet access options was provided in Memo # 7. In addition, we have communicated current internet hot spots available.

UPDATE: We have procured and began installing additional hotspots on our buses today. These mobile hotspots should be ready to deploy to a convenient location near you by next week. We feel confident we can meet all needs within our community.

Personal Items / Supplies

We fielded several questions regarding personal items, school supplies, learning packets, etc. At this time, we are critically-sensitive to any personal contact or transfer of physical items which could be contaminated and pass on the virus into our homes. Similarly, we want to eliminate the chance of any personal contact passing along the virus. Accordingly, we are not moving forward with plans to access personal items or learning materials of a physical nature at this time. These items will remain safe in our schools and will be returned when the proper time allows. Like medications, if there are critical personal items that need to be returned, please email me directly at jwheeler@knr8.net so that we may respond.

Continuity of Business

For employees, we have received confirmation that state funding will continue. Accordingly, there will be no interruption in pay or benefits. I am confident that each and every member of the KNPS Team will put forward her/his best effort to

serve our students, serve our community, and help one another. In Knob Noster Public Schools, Our Mission Is Student Success...and the mission will succeed through this situation.

UPDATE: Beginning Monday March 23, the district will exercise a voluntary physical report for mission critical staff only. All other faculty and staff will be required to perform duties virtually. As stated above, we are critically-sensitive to any physical contact or transfer of physical items which could be contaminated and pass on the virus.

Dynamic Environment

Clearly, this situation continues to evolve every day, if not every hour. Moving forward, we are keying closely on the trajectory of the virus curve locally, regionally, and nationally. One week ago, many of us were still gearing up for a relatively normal Spring Break. No doubt this week has brought many changes. Looking ahead one week, we may see far less or far more change in posture for this issue. I want to again thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate these uncharted waters. We will continue to make informed, thoughtful decisions that we believe are in the best most-immediate needs of our students and community. As shared prior, we have a great community, and I look forward to finding our way forward together.

The district will continue to archive all communication and information on our webpage which may be accessed by [clicking here](#). Or, you may visit www.knr8.net.

As always, we sincerely appreciate your understanding and partnership as we work together to serve our students and community. Should you have any questions or comments, please direct your inquiry to jwheeler@knobnoster.k12.mo.us.

[Click Here to Complete the Survey](#)

Very Respectfully,

Jerrold Wheeler, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools