



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 22, 2020
To: Knob Noster Public Schools Community
From: Superintendent Jerrod Wheeler
RE: Covid-19 Update – Faculty and Staff First Day Back

KNPS Team:

I am writing with a couple of updates as we head into the week ahead. As spring break comes to a close, I hope each of you found a way to break a way a little and hopefully reflect on those priorities in our lives that cause us to do what we do as educators, parents, spouses, family members, and friends. In times like these, it is more critical than ever that we find our core values and beliefs and keep them front of mind as we tackle the task ahead. In my reflection this week, I was reminded how thankful I am that my family and I are part of the Knob Noster Team and Knob Noster Community. I know we have a tough road ahead, but I also have a calm confidence because I know we can take this in stride as a team and as a community. I want to say thank you for all you have done over the break, and for all the things you will do this week to take care of our students, families, and community.

That said, I want to reinforce the current operational procedures which were shared with your principals on Friday to frame our efforts moving forward. These parameters will likely evolve moving forward, but this is where we are heading into this week. Please be sure to abide by these as we move forward, unless different information is provided.

1. Universal Precautions: We will continue to follow all local, state, and national guidelines and mandates regarding safety and the prevention of spreading the virus. Be sure to use Social Distancing at all times, and ensure you are following guidance on hygiene, washing hands, etc.

2. Mandatory No Physical Report-Mandatory Virtual Report: All employees are on mandatory no physical report until further notice. The exceptions are the following groups: administration and directors, food service, maintenance/custodial, and administrative assistants. Employees in these groups are on voluntary physical report. All other employees are on required virtual report, meaning you are to engage virtually over the next week in planning for the following week. I believe this planning will encompass all employee segments with the exception of our transportation team. We will communicate directly with this group regarding work options/requirements. This is going to be a tough one, but eliminating all non-essential physical reporting is critical. These precautions are being implemented to reduce district liability in terms of a district employee potentially spreading the virus.

3. Emphasis on Low Stress: As shared in my last memo, our way forward in ALL words, actions, and plans is to ensure we are not adding stress into the lives of our students, parents and team. While we want learning to continue to the fullest extent possible, this is secondary to health. We want to ensure we are conscientious of our own stress/health as well as the stress/health of those we serve.

4. No Physical Exchange: With the exception of absolute essential exchange of physical items (medications/food/remaining student devices), we are restricting the exchange of any physical items from any employee into any home other than their own. This means no student handouts, mailings, etc. will be allowed at this time. While this is going to make our work even more difficult, this is another important measure being taken to reduce the liability in terms of a district employee potentially spreading the virus.

5. Alignment of Virtual Instruction / Communication: Like me, I imagine each of you have been bombarded with offers, suggestions, and ideas about how to deliver virtual education. As we align our plans, it will be absolutely critical that we carefully align plans, narrow scope, ensure maximum consistency, and NOT overwhelm our students and families by throwing too much at them or by being inconsistent, etc. I have asked Mr. Cohron, Dr. Rolofson, your principals, and Mr. Davis and team to coordinate and align these efforts. Look for an initial outline following this email. I have also asked that they review and filter information to ensure we send consistent information out at consistent times. We want to develop our plans and parameters in a way that we can point all parents and students to the same information at the same time. What we do not want is 170 teachers communicating on social media to parents or the public in ways that represent formal plans. This is a good recipe for inconsistency and failure. We want to encourage your creativity and ideas, but we want to channel them in the best way possible as part of a unified plan.

7. I Don't Know is Ok: As we move through this situation, there are lots of unknowns. GPA's Class Rank, AP Exams, Dual Credit, are some of the unknowns for High School as of now, but we will sort that out. Screen time, length of instructional day, student supports are some of the unknowns at the elementary levels. However, we have some initial guidance for that. As we move forward, we will take this a step at a time and be thoughtful about how we answer these question. If you field universal questions that do not relate to your specific lane, please direct those questions to your principal, the appropriate director, or me.

I know these restrictions may seem difficult to embrace....they were not easy to write either. But at this time there is a reason these are being asked of all of us.

As we move forward this week with planning, I encourage you to keep it light and focus on reconnecting and leveraging the personal aspects of your instruction/relationship with your students. I think the idea of a spirit week is a great way to kick things off, make things personal, and uplift the situation. Well done with that idea, team!

I am proud of how our team has responded to this situation, and I look forward to the great work ahead this week. Good luck, and please reach out for help if needed.

v/r

JW