

March 12, 2020

Dear Brewer Families,

Ongoing developments regarding the COVID-19 outbreak across various regions of the world and the United States have started to be felt locally with disruptions to various regional institutions and activities. The purpose of this letter is to share current planning and update you on some new developments, including the following:

- While the University of Maine, Bowdoin, and other colleges and universities are sending students home for the remainder of the semester, the Brewer School Department is not canceling school due to the virus. Such a step would only be taken if the Maine Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommended it. No such recommendations are currently being made for local public schools.
- Organizations are canceling events which impacts some Brewer students including recent cancellation of the following: all Special Olympics events, unified basketball contests, the State High School Jazz competition, and the State High School one-act play competition.
- We are canceling student trips if they include travel to an area experiencing a spike in cases of COVID-19. This includes canceling a Boston trip our Brewer High School music program was going to take. Some local trips may still be able to go forward.
- There are currently no cases reported in Maine. However, out of caution we are adjusting how we run certain activities. To that end we are still adjusting some school functions. We are, for instance, currently planning on holding our annual Junior Exhibition and prom while also considering how to maximize health and safety at these and other events. We may need to make some changes, but the goal is to be able to have our students enjoy school-based activities while also being cautious.

We are considering various contingencies in case an individual student or staff member needs to be home due to illness, or if the Maine CDC were to recommend that we close the schools for any period of time.

If a student or staff member had to be out we would treat it the same way we always have for any illness, family trip, or any other reason that caused a person to be absent. We would provide work, if the student were feeling well enough to focus on it, and we would help them catch up when they returned to school. If a teacher was out then we would make sure there was quality work for those classes so a substitute could help the teacher's students engage in meaningful learning until the teacher returned.

If we had to cancel school for everyone, we would still be able to make and distribute meals to any students who needed it during the daytime. We would also have recommended learning tasks that any student could work on while school was out. For instance, students could keep a daily journal that had particular requirements and that could be discussed when school resumed. We understand that not all students have internet or would necessarily have someone with them all day who could help them with school work. Therefore, we would look to provide educational tasks that have few barriers in order to participate but that create solid learning opportunities. We call these low floor (easy to get into), high ceiling (lots of potential for learning) activities.

The Brewer School Department will follow the recommendations of medical experts at the Maine CDC in order to keep our students and staff safe while still providing an effective, accessible education. We will continue to communicate with Brewer families regarding any new developments.

Sincerely,
Gregg Palmer, Superintendent