

To: USD 444 Parents

From: Brent Garrison, USD 444 Superintendent

Date: March 18, 2020

As superintendent, I wanted to communicate with USD 444 parents on behalf of the school board, administration, and staff. Without question, we are in some challenging times, but we will succeed in doing what is best for our students educationally while also keeping the safety of all constituents as a priority. We know that there are, and will be, many questions. I hope that this communication will help ease your mind as we move forward. Please know that we do not have all of the answers at this point as things are changing almost daily. We ask for, and appreciate, your patience and understanding as we work things out in the best interest of our students.

Below are several informational points at this time. Know that these could change or be modified, but we will keep in communication on a frequent basis.

- Next week, teaching staff will be reporting to work, likely virtually, to begin planning and putting into place a Continuous Learning plan for students. At this time, March 30th is the date students will begin their Continuous Learning plan. We will communicate more with you later next week on details.
- USD 444 will be needing some feedback in some various areas to determine needs, so we ask that you be alert for possible digital surveys or requested feedback.
- Prom has been suspended, but not canceled. We will be looking at options in the future for this event.
- Graduation has NOT been canceled, but the selected date of May 16 may very well change. As long as students fulfill their requirements, which will include the continuous learning plan, we will make sure there is a graduation. More information will become available as we know more.
- There will be no Parent/Teacher Conferences @ WES on Monday, March 23, and the student showcase @ LRJSH has been canceled. Teachers will communicate with parents as needed. 3rd nine weeks report cards will be mailed out sometime in the near future.
- All USD 444 activities are suspended at this time. Any additional information will be communicated as we learn more.
- Any LRJSH student that is currently enrolled in an online course from college or Acellus should continue that coursework and complete those classes.
- The USD 444 weight room, as a part of the school facility, is also now closed until further notice. We apologize for this inconvenience, but appreciate your understanding for community safety.
- If you have a child that has medication at school that is needed, please contact your building principal.

Below are some quick Q & A's that we hope will answer some additional questions.

Can I come get my things (or my child's things) from school?

At this time, no. We will let you know when you may as we develop a plan next week.

Can I come to school?

No. We have been advised to keep everyone out of all facilities until our plan is in place. This includes our athletic facilities and playgrounds at this time. This could change at a later date.

Will the teachers come back?

Yes, in some fashion. We will have next week to allow for planning to prepare for our Continuous Education plan for students. Teachers will be working for you and your student(s).

Can students eventually come to school for certain classes?

Again, we do not know at this time and will keep you updated. We do know that if we are able to have small groups in the future, those groups can be no larger than 10 people.

How will the Continuous Learning plan and/or online learning work?

The outstanding teachers and staff of USD 444 will be putting together a great plan and share the details with you later when they are available. The staff at Little River and Windom are awesome and their minds are already working overtime to figure out a workable plan for your child(ren). Your support and confidence in our staff is greatly appreciated, now more than ever.

What if I don't have the internet at home, or if my internet data plan is limited?

All of those questions and concerns will be analyzed by teachers and administration next week. Feel confident that we will have a plan in place that will meet student needs as best we can under these circumstances.

Are breakfast and lunch meals going to be available?

We will also be working on a plan over the next week to address meal needs. Again, parent feedback will be important once we get something out to you for response.

Are the meals free for all students?

Yes, for ages 1-18 is what has been communicated to us at this time.

What if I have other questions?

We ask for your patience and understanding as this is a developing situation and we know that we do not have all the answers yet. Our principals can be reached at [aherbst@usd444.com](mailto:aherbst@usd444.com) and [jpaden@usd444.com](mailto:jpaden@usd444.com).

My e-mail is [bgarrison@usd444.com](mailto:bgarrison@usd444.com)

In closing, please know that your child's safety, along with that of the community and state, is our priority. As well, your child's education is greatly valued and all USD 444 staff is devoted to make the best of this circumstance. With your support, we absolutely know that we will be successful, and grow, in this challenging experience. We ARE USD 444... and the Little River, Windom, and Marquette communities will get through this together.