March 22, 2020

Dear Riverside Families,

What has happened so far:

As you know, last week we received the difficult news that school, as we know it, will not continue for the remainder of this school year. We realize the hardship a school closure places on our families as well as the social and emotional impact it may have on our students. Governor Laura Kelly directed school districts to implement a continuous learning plan to ensure that learning continues for students virtually or through assignments completed at home.

The morning following the governor’s announcement, our food service personnel began working hard writing a waiver so that we could provide free meals to anyone ages 1-18. The new food service program began immediately thanks to so many of our teachers and staff working together. The same-day pick-up is continuing daily (Monday-Friday) between 11:30 am – 12:30 pm on both campuses. All children are given that day’s lunch and next morning’s breakfast.

On Wednesday evening all Kansas schools were provided with a Continuous Learning Guide from the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE). This guide will be used by our school to develop our own Continuous Learning Plan that will be implemented the week of March 30th.

On Thursday morning Riverside USD 114 convened our District Leadership Team (DLT). This group of educators began adapting the state’s guidance in ways that work best for Riverside students and teachers. We established a timeline, to begin Monday, for teacher professional development and work in grade level or subject area teams.

What happens next:

On Monday, our DLT will continue meeting to move our Continuous Learning Plan forward. We will implement our Professional Development with teachers, and each building will be working on lesson plans, learning packets, and online learning.

Timeline to resume learning:

Monday, March 23rd through Friday, March 27th:

➢ Teachers/Principals engage in professional development and planning for Continuous Learning. Teachers develop plans for this new model of learning.
- Each building will develop a plan for staggered pick up of student supplies, materials, and technology devices, if needed. Details will be communicated to parents this week, with the goal of completing pick up by Friday, March 27th.

Monday, March 30th:

- Teachers/Principals communicate plans to students and families.
- Our new model of school and learning begins.

**Our mission:**

1. The health and safety of our students, staff, and community come first.
2. Focus on the essentials: What do students need to be taught between now and the end of the year?
3. Grace: We all need to show each other grace during this time of transition. This is a challenging time for all of us, and we will all work together as a team to figure this out.

As a reminder, the school closure was in response to the current public health crisis. The focus of us all should remain on preventing the spread of the coronavirus or COVID-19. We encourage you to comply with health experts’ recommendations. If you can, please stay home and enjoy family time. If you must go out, please practice social distancing, allowing at least 6 feet between you and other individuals. We will continue to use email, alert calling system, social media, and the USD 114 website for up-to-date information.

Our school district has faced challenges before, perhaps none as daunting as this one; however, we are hopeful and encourage you to not lose hope. Storms make people stronger and they don’t last forever. Our teachers, principals, and staff are committed to preparing our students for the future over the next few weeks. Everyone knows I’m an avid reader of history. When Winston Churchill and his people were facing the darkest days of World War II, he said, “It is not enough to do our best; sometimes we must do what is required.” I can assure you that we will not only do our best for your children, we will do all that is required! We are all hopeful that this change in learning will only last for a short time and we will all be back together soon. Thank you for partnering with us!

Sincerely,

Robert W. Blair
Superintendent
Other Frequently Asked Questions:

Does our school have to make up the time we have already missed?

We can receive a waiver from the state on the 1,116 hour school year requirement. To do that we are required to implement a “Continuous Learning” instructional program and submit our plan to KSDE prior to April 8th. The Riverside USD 114 Board of Education will have a special meeting to approve our district’s plan sometime prior to us submitting it to KSDE. The waiver will allow us to complete the school year in May and not have to make up the time we have missed when school was not in session.

How long will the grab and go meals be provided? We expect the grab-and-go breakfasts and lunches to continue through the last previously scheduled day of school.

What about graduation, prom, etc.? Unfortunately, CDC guidelines will not allow us to have large gatherings such as graduation and prom as previously scheduled. They are postponed at this time. We are extremely proud of our seniors, and we are hopeful that the current situation will change at some point allowing us to honor them.

Are spring activities canceled? The KSHSAA announced on March 18th that it has canceled all spring championships, competitions, and festivals for the remainder of the school year.

When can my child retrieve personal belongings and needed school learning materials from school? This week each building will be working on a plan for this so that we will stagger the pick-up by the end of the week. Each building will communicate these plans to parents and students in the next few days.

Will summer Driver’s Education be affected by these changes? At this time, none of us know how long this situation will continue. Summer Driver’s Education is on hold at this time.

How will my child meet the requirements to move to the next grade level? Riverside teachers and administrators will be developing the “Continuous Learning” plan that will be based on state educational standards to ensure the students meet the essential competencies for each course or grade level advancement. Every student will be given the opportunity to complete the necessary standards for his or her grade level. Don’t worry about you child losing ground, when we eventually return to the classrooms we will meet students where they are. Teachers having been doing this for years and are experts at it.

What if we don’t have Internet access at home for online learning? The Riverside technology department has sent out a survey to determine each family’s access to the Internet. We are continuing to work on Internet issues or gaps that may limit instruction. This week our building staffs will be working on ways to address these issues and gaps through different approaches, such as learning packets that may not require Internet access. Also, Rainbow has informed us they are exploring ways to provide Internet “Hot Spot” locations. I talked with Rainbow yesterday and they are planning to install “Hot Spots” in both Elwood and Wathena tomorrow. We will let you know these locations as soon as possible.