March 24, 2020

Dear Parents, Students, Staff, and Community Members:

Based on Governor Noem’s decision on Tuesday, March 24, our District will remain closed through Friday, May 1. We ask our students, staff, families, and community to practice social distancing. Health professionals believe we will be at greatest risk of the virus spreading in the coming weeks.

The following link provides information regarding the coronavirus and tips to keep children healthy while school is out, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/children.html. The information is summarized in this letter.

School closures and social distancing are helping our state to flatten the curve and ensure our healthcare facilities are able to provide essential care to those in need. During these unprecedented times, our District will continue to offer support to our students and families as we all work to lessen the impact of the COVID-19.

Our District will continue to offer alternative education options and e-learning opportunities to our students in grades JK-12. Our teachers are using a variety of teaching methods for student learning. They will continue to interact with their students. If your family does not have internet access, please contact your child’s principal. Our District is in the process of creating an e-learning dashboard at the top of our webpage, http://www.beresford.k12.sd.us/e-learning-dashboard. The dashboard will provide links to all of our teachers, their email addresses, office hours and eventually content and lessons.

Beginning Monday, March 30 and throughout our school closure, our District will offer free breakfast and free lunches to all students in grades JK-12. On Mondays, students will receive three (3) breakfasts and three (3) lunches. On Thursdays, students will receive two (2) breakfasts and two (2) lunches. The meals will be distributed from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays outside at the northwest corner of the multi-purpose room at the south campus (301 W. Maple St.). Parents or students may pick up the meals while maintaining social distancing. Students are reminded to please wash their hands with soap and water before consuming any food.

We would ask our parents to please teach and reinforce everyday preventive actions. Following are some steps to protect children from getting sick:

- Clean hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid people who are sick (coughing and sneezing)
- Limit time with older adults, relatives, and people with serious underlying medical conditions—if others in your home are at particularly high risk for severe illness from COVID-19, consider extra precautions to separate your child from those people
- Limit in-person social interactions and practice social distancing
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily in household common areas (e.g. tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, and sinks)
• Launder items including washable plush toys as appropriate and launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely

On behalf of our District, we would like to thank our parents for their support and focus on helping their children with continuous learning opportunities. Following are some tips to help your child with their learning at home:

• Stay in touch with your child’s teacher and school
• Review assignments and help your child establish a reasonable pace for completing work
• Communicate challenges to your child’s teacher and school, whether technology, connectivity, difficulty completing assignments, etc.
• Create a schedule and routine for learning at home but remain flexible
• Structure the day for learning, free time, healthy meals and snacks, and physical activity
• Help your child stay active by encouraging outdoor play as it is great for physical and mental health, take a walk or go on a bike ride with your child
• Talk to your child about expectations and how they are adjusting to being at home versus at school
• Consider ways your child can stay socially connected with their family and friends without spending time in person—via phone or video chats
• Look for ways to make learning fun
• Write letters and cards to family members and friends that you may not be able to visit
• Start a journal with your child to document this time and discuss the shared experience

Please watch your child for any signs of illness.

• If you see any sign of illness consistent with symptoms of COVID-19, particularly fever, cough, or shortness of breath, call your healthcare provider and keep your child at home and away from others as much as possible. Follow CDC’s guidance on “What to do if you are sick.”

Please watch for signs of stress in your child.

• Some common changes to watch for include excessive worry or sadness, unhealthy eating or sleeping habits, and difficulty with attention and concentration. For more information, see the “For Parents” section on CDC’s website, Manage Anxiety and Stress.
• Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
• Go to CDC’s Helping Children Cope with Emergencies or Talking with Children About COVID-19 for more information.

A great deal of information provided in this letter was courtesy of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and their National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you again for your continued support during our school closure.

Sincerely,

Brian Field, Superintendent
Beresford School District