

## PINE RIVER AREA SCHOOLS -- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Update, School and Event Closures/Stoppages

April 3, 2020

At a press conference yesterday—April 2, 2020—Gov. Gretchen Whitmer informed our state of the signing of Executive Order 2020-35 which effectively closed down all public and private K-12 schools in order to slow the spread of COVID-19. The order specifically stopped all face-to-face instruction for the school year, but gave direction to schools on how to use alternative modes of instructional delivery such as online or via correspondence packets.

**In compliance with this directive, Pine River Area School buildings will be closed for the remainder of the school year and not reopen until the fall of 2020.**

We understand the hardships and mixed feelings as a result of the governor's ordered school closure and difficult times we are facing as a district and state. Our students, staff, families, and community are facing a difficult crisis. We also know that this closure brings to mind many questions with varying levels of complexity. The PRAS administration, faculty, and support staff have been working to continue to supply food to those in need and conducting multiple meetings with all stakeholders in designing a Continuity of Learning Plan for ISD approval.

It is more important now than ever that we collaborate, communicate, and center our efforts on readying our children for the future. Pine River Area Schools are committed to ensuring the success of our kids and community. We are all in this together. We are here to serve.

The building principals will be releasing a joint letter next week and then individually they will be reaching out to their students and parents. Please know we are working hard to gain and share as much information as possible as we all navigate this constantly-changing terrain. For now, we'd like to address some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

**FAQs.** What does this mean for:

**Food Delivery/Service**—Part of the governor's Executive Order 2020-35 was an increased expectation to reduce exposure and that includes decreasing the amount of people involved in preparing, packing, and distributing food. As a result, Pine River Area Schools is encouraging folks to pick up food at our designated Friday afternoon (3:30—4:30 p.m.) locations in Ashton (at the monument), LeRoy Elementary, Luther Elementary, and Cadillac's B&B on M-115. We will call next week to see if folks need continued delivery if they cannot make it to a pick up site. We will help in any way possible.

**Education and Instruction**—PRAS student instruction is going to look different for the rest of the school year, but we want to ensure you that we are giving ALL STUDENTS the ability

to build a strong foundation for the 2020-2021 school year! We are working right now on our Continuity of Learning Plan and it will be released on our homepage in the next couple of weeks. More information coming soon.

**Sports Seasons**—All events scheduled at Pine River Area Schools through the end of the school year are canceled. The MHSAA has made its decision final as of today, April 3, 2020. Winter and spring sports are ended, effective March 13, 2020.

## **Seniors and Graduation**

**Will the seniors graduate?** All seniors on track to graduate this school year will graduate this May. If coursework was being passed on March 13, credit will be given for the remainder of the second semester, 2020. Contact will be made by the principal or guidance counselor by April 10 if there is an academic concern regarding graduation.

**Will there be a graduation ceremony? What about Academic/Athletic Awards? Baccalaureate? Scholarships?** We are working on a way to accomplish these very important milestone ceremonies and moments. Look for direction on the “News” section of our website coming soon.

**What about M-STEP, SATs, and other testing?** All testing has been suspended for the school year. The governor is working on a way for our current junior class to sit for the SAT test in the fall as seniors.

**Will there be a Junior/Senior Prom?** There is no safe way to congregate and hold our prom this spring. It is cancelled for 2020.

**Will students in grade K-11 be promoted to the next grade level for fall of 2020?** Yes, provided they were making satisfactory progress as of March 13, 2020. We understand that there will be some learning “gaps” as a result, but it is our belief that we can work together to close those gaps with good communication between the home and the school.

## **Will there be a summer school still?**

The elementary, middle, and high school are considering different scenarios and must gain approval from the ISD as part of our Continuity of Learning Plan. We will let folks know soon on the “News” section of our website.

**Updates for the future?** We will be diligent in addressing needs and reaching out via our webpage and school Facebook page. Look for text messages, emails, and website updates. Our principals will be reaching out soon followed by our teachers. Look at the “News” section of our webpage and app frequently.

At the end of the day, we are all PRoud of our community and kids! We have PRide in who we are and in what we do to keep our students safe and strong. If you have specific

questions, do not hesitate to call or email your child's building office. We are here to assist, answer questions, and help. Above all, stay safe. Wash your hands frequently. Maintain social distancing. We will get through this together. Bucks thrive in herds, find strength when the hunt is the hardest, and always, always, think of the group first.

*Anything that annoys you is teaching you patience. Anyone who abandons you is teaching you how to stand up on your own two feet. Anything that angers you is teaching you forgiveness and compassion. Anything that has power over you is teaching you how to take your power back. Anything you hate is teaching you unconditional love. Anything you fear is teaching you courage to overcome your fear.*

Stand Tall, Bucks! Stay PRoud!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matt Lukshaitis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matt Lukshaitis, Superintendent, Pine River Area Schools