



Jacksonville | North Pulaski
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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www.jnpsd.org

Building Futures: Every Scholar, Every Day

April 26, 2020

6:53 pm

JNPSD School Community:

Governor Hutchinson held his daily press conference on Saturday, and Johnny Key, Secretary of Education, made remarks during the briefing. Below is a summary of the comments (Source: Arkansas Public Resource Center report):

The Governor announced that traditional high school graduations cannot be held before July 1.

"I've received a lot of calls, and I'm very sympathetic because I have a granddaughter who is a senior this year," Governor Asa Hutchinson said. "This kind of gathering could lead to the spread of COVID-19, so we will not have this kind of large gathering."

Arkansas Department of Education Secretary Johnny Key noted that high school graduation is often the most attended event in a community for the year. As the July 1 target date approaches, the Arkansas Department of Education will work with the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) to look at public health data to see if the date needs to be modified.

"When you have family and friends and friends from across the state and out of state, we cannot mitigate the risk of spread sufficiently," Secretary Key said. "We are asking all schools to not plan any traditional graduation ceremony prior to July 1."

For those schools that choose to host a celebration prior to July 1, the Arkansas Department of Education will allow them to host non-traditional events either by remote, digital, or video means that comply with social distancing protocols and the restriction on gatherings of 10 or more people.

All schools electing to host a non-traditional celebration will need to submit a proposal to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) this week for evaluation. DESE will work with ADH to determine if there are any areas

of concern, and will consult with the school if any modifications will need to be made. DESE will send out additional guidance to superintendents on how to submit their proposals and turn around proposals submitted as soon as possible.

“I ask all schools to be patient as we work through this situation,” Secretary Key said. “I would encourage schools to wait until after July 1, but if that is not an option for you, we will make this option [non-traditional celebration] available for you.”

During the press conference, a question was raised regarding planning for the fall. Secretary Key shared that DESE has a number of teams working on contingency plans and will present the Governor options in the coming weeks.

Governor Hutchinson said, “The intention is we will have a full school year and normal class operation next year. That would be the first design we would have. However, it’s important we configure different scenarios if in the event circumstances dictate that is necessary.”

1. Senior Scholars and Families:

A virtual graduation option is being produced by Jostens and school staff. This video presentation will be available for families by mid-May.

Other senior announcements will be shared from the high school staff as programming is finalized. Staff are contacting seniors concerning various end-of-year information needed from seniors. Please check emails, phone messages, and JNPSD social media often.

PLANS FOR ON-SITE GRADUATION CEREMONY

These plans are contingent on state guidance from the Arkansas Department of Health and the Arkansas Department of Education. Plans are subject to change based on state directives.

The UALR Stephens Center is closed through Mid-August, and we do not have any guaranteed date for a ceremony on the UALR campus at this time.

Plan A: July 31 (Aug 1 or 2 as alternate date for weather)
Evening Start Time – TBA
Titan Stadium on the JHS campus

Plan B: Ceremony at indoor venue in November or December
Near Thanksgiving Break or during Christmas Break
UALR Stephens Center availability is not known at this time
Other locations may be considered

Plan C: Late Winter / Early Spring Ceremony
Location and Date – TBA

We know the situation is not ideal, and we appreciate your support as we plan celebrations of our seniors. If any local or state information changes, you will be informed.

2. The May 4 school board meeting has been rescheduled for May 11 at 6 pm. Based on state guidance, a decision will be made whether the board meeting will be a digital format or in-person format. The June board meeting will take place as planned (first Monday of the month).

Thank you for your understanding and support!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Duffie', written in a cursive style.

Bryan Duffie. Ed.D.
Superintendent