



DISTRICT OR-1

PALMYRA JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL--BENNET ELEMENTARY

P.O. BOX 130 PALMYRA, NE 68418 402-780-5327 www.districtor1.org

Robert Hanger
Superintendent

Heath Johnson
Secondary Principal

Linde Walter
Elementary Principal

Aaron Hoeft
Activities Director

OR-1 Families,

After meeting in discussion with Commissioner Blomstedt and Governor Ricketts this afternoon and ongoing discussions over the past week we have compiled hours of dialogue, conversation and analysis surrounding the appropriate steps to take during this extraordinary time in our nation, state and local communities. Schools across the nation and state have all taken different approaches to how to mitigate the spread of the virus and the impact on schools and universities. As a district we are continuing those discussions with our local health departments, the Department of Education and area school leaders to maintain an updated flow of information as the situation changes rapidly. Our concern continues to be the safety of our students and staff and to work with our partners to discuss and share how best to proceed with certain facets of educational services in the event of a long term closure.

As of our latest discussions including communication with numerous area school Superintendents, we are operating with similar objectives and a common planning approach dependent upon individual school district calendars. It should be noted that as of this hour a school closure has not been advised by our local health department nor any state or federal agency. We recognize that a premature closure may be detrimental to efforts in slowing the spread of the virus. However, it should also be noted that when a long term closure is determined to be in our best interest that event will happen quickly and decisively. We have been informed by Governor Ricketts to prepare for the likelihood of a 6-8 week closure. To that end we continue to plan with the best available information and to convey those thoughts and procedures to you as we make decisions. The process for developing home based study options began in earnest last week. Please be aware that if a long term closure is ordered it may include the inability to bring our staff to the workplace to maintain collaborate and develop lesson materials for upcoming weeks. The process for planning home based enrichment materials is arduous and time consuming requiring careful forethought and time. Moving forward our game plan will be as follows:

We feel it is in the best interest of our students, their parents, and our school family to dismiss school on Monday, March 16th and Tuesday, March 17th in order to organize, prepare and refine our staff preparations for what could be a long term dismissal. Certified staff will report to continue the development of enrichment materials in the anticipation of a long term school

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closure. Support staff will also report and assist this process and continue to provide deep cleaning services throughout both campus locations as well as refining food service operations. Our current plan at this moment in time will then bring students back on Wednesday, March 18th pending further developments related to the virus and community spread.

Our decision while certainly not easy is one that we have crafted in the best interest of our students, staff and parents. As such it has been reviewed and scrutinized over many hours. We are working in step with our neighboring districts and partners through a scenario in which events are changing by the hour and as such be prepared for additional updates. Please pay close attention to our twitter feed, mobile app and website.

Significant dates and announcements:

March 16-17 - No School for Students - STAFF REPORT - Preparations for Closing

**Note - Although we have a plan for extended enrichment, we have not had the time to practice and refine potential delivery methods. This would be staff development and logistical preparation time.

March 18 - SCHOOL RESUMES

**Note - Students will come to school to be trained, readied and prepared for extended services.

**During this time period we will be consulting with our state and local Public Health Care Providers, determining next steps and communicating with parents and students.

March 21 or 22 - Announcement for the week of March 23-27.

District OR-1 Schools will take a measured, logical, yet safe and preventative approach in our response to the current pandemic.

Note that we will be restricting campus visitors until further notice.

We continue to work with the NSAA and NDE regarding upcoming events that were scheduled and may be cancelled. Please watch for announcements.

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Student Attendance: While attendance is important it is critical in our current situation that you keep your student/students home if they are ill.

Effective Immediately: Use of campus facilities by all outside groups will be prohibited until further notice. This includes gym access for youth practices.

Watch for a survey instrument regarding internet service at your home location. This will be sent out today in order to determine each student's access to technology. We will also be communicating how devices such as Chromebooks will be distributed in the event of a closure.

Please continue to refer to the CDC guidance regarding all information related to the virus:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

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