

# KEYSTONE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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April 13, 2020

## **RE: Closure Update for Remainder of the 2019-20 School Year**

Dear Parents/Guardians, Students & Staff:

First, I'd like to once again thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate through these uncharted territories together. The following information provides updated guidance on the statewide school closure as well as our response efforts at the present time.

### **Extended School Closure**

The Secretary of Education announced last week that all schools in the Commonwealth **will remain closed until the end of the 2019-2020 academic year** as a result of the COVID-19 response efforts. Under the new order, schools will not reopen for regular operations during this academic year, which runs through June 30, 2020.

Keystone School District's current school calendar will conclude for students on May 29, 2020, which will effectively be the final day of the 2019-20 school year. We sincerely hoped that we would return to normal operations before this school year concluded; however, the Secretary's order is intended to preserve the health, safety and welfare of our Commonwealth's citizenry.

Our district will evaluate the possibility of optional summer programming opportunities for students; however, those evaluations will be based solely on the COVID-19 situation and guidance provided to us by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

### **Continuity of Instruction**

During the school closure, the Keystone School District will continue providing Continuity of Education (CoE) opportunities through Enrichment and Review. These opportunities will conclude on May 29, 2020, which will serve as the final day of the 2019-20 school year. Our teachers have been working to provide equitable opportunities for all students to access these materials via hardcopy packet distribution and the supplemental use of online links, platforms and resources. We will continue working to update Enrichment and Review opportunities for all students and parents/guardians throughout the remainder of the school closure. As previously stated, no assignments will be collected or graded for completion during the closure.

### **Concerns About Grades & Outstanding Assignments**

In an effort to provide equity in grading for all students, no new grades from work assigned after March 13 will be factored in to final GPA or QPA for the 2019-20 school year. Effectively, all students will receive a "Pass" or "Fail" based on the grade average students achieved during the 3<sup>rd</sup> marking period. Students will receive a "No Mark" for the 4<sup>th</sup> marking period, which will not affect final grades, promotion to the next grade level, or GPA/QPA. This will not impact or influence your ability to pursue admission to higher education, the military or the workforce. All of these institutions are preparing to address the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on their incoming classes. We are making plans for Report Card distribution in the near future. Transcript requests should be directed to the Keystone Junior-Senior High School Guidance Department.

### **Meal Service During Mandatory School Closure**

The Keystone School District will continue providing FREE meal service to all students, ages 18 and under, during the mandatory school closure. Meals are being served on Tuesdays and Fridays from 11:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

### **Seniors – The Class of 2020**

We continue to understand (and empathize with) the unique challenges and disappointments that pertain to our district's senior class. No senior, in good standing, will be prevented from graduating this school year. Mr. Wagner and other members of the Keystone Junior-Senior High School staff will be releasing additional guidance specific to the 2019-20 senior class over the next few days. As part of the Secretary's order, he waived provisions of law and regulation for the 2019-20 school year in connections with the Pandemic of 2020 that pertain to: 1) Waiving the 180-day requirement for all students; 2) Waiving the minimum total number of hours required for a career and technical education program; and, 3) Waiving the statewide administration of all state assessments (i.e. PSSA, Keystone Exam), which also includes NIMS and NOCTI exams for students in career and technical education. The waivers are to ensure that all students in good standing—*especially seniors*—will be able to move forward with the next phase of their lives (workforce, higher education, military commitment, etc.) without delay. More guidance to follow...

### **PIAA Winter Championships & Spring Sports Season**

Following the Secretary's order, the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) cancelled all remaining Winter and Spring sports and championships.

### **Student Ceremonies & Special Activities**

We've had many questions about graduation ceremonies and other student activities/celebrations (i.e. Prom). At this point in time, student ceremonies and special activities are prohibited. We believe it would be counterproductive to reschedule these activities until the statewide "Stay at Home" order is lifted and we receive further guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Even when the "Stay at Home" order is lifted and Pennsylvanians begin transitioning back to work, we anticipate there will be additional information pertaining to large gatherings and revised social distancing rules. We will make informed decisions about any future ceremonies or activities based on the available data and medical guidance. More information to follow...

### **Personal Belongings & School-owned Materials**

We understand this is an important topic for all members of our school community. You may have materials that belong to the school as well as personal belongings in desks and lockers. We believe it would be irresponsible to coordinate an exchange of materials at this point in time. We assure you that we will take a systematic approach to this exchange of belongings once the "Stay at Home" order has been lifted and COVID-19 mitigation guidance allows for such an activity to take place. We will not allow any action that puts the health, safety or welfare of our school community (i.e. students, staff, parents/guardians) in harm's way.

### **Miscellaneous**

We will continue to provide updates to these essential topics (and many others) when we have additional information to share. We recognize the continued pain and sacrifice that many of you are dealing with as a result of this pandemic. I've made it clear from the beginning that everyone has been affected in one way or another. Our priority is to remain focused on the health, safety and welfare of our school community. We are grateful to all of you on the front lines of this pandemic and everyone who is dealing with the difficult effects of the mitigation efforts. Our thoughts are with you. Please stay well.

Sincerely,



Shawn Algoe, Superintendent