

LETTER FROM DONNA VEILE, SUPERINTENDENT OF PAYSON CUSD #1

March 23th, 2020

Dear Students, Parents, and Community Members:

On March 20, 2020, Governor J.B. Pritzker announced the extension of the closing of all schools in Illinois. At this point, school will resume on April 8th. The governor has not yet declared these additional days as “Act of God” days like the previous weeks. This means I don’t know if these additional days and potential additional days will or won’t extend the school calendar. With guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education, our school attorney David Penn, our regional office of education and our regional superintendent Jill Reis, and many other local superintendents, Payson CUSD#1 will proceed with the following plan:

- Students will be sent home with work that will be aimed at continual academic engagement. Teachers can include review materials and an introduction to some new topics that may be covered when school resumes.
- CUSD#1 has applied for a waiver to still serve a daily meal to students throughout this hiatus. While the plan is fluid and could change based on the number of families served, the current district plan is a pick up outside of the school. The plan is meant to be as quick and with as little contact as possible, in order to follow the guidelines of social distancing.
- At this point, all spring sports activities are still postponed. No practices or contests will resume until school resumes.
- There are a lot of unanswered questions relating to drivers education, second semester credits, graduation ceremony, prom, etc. We are doing our best to find answers to these questions. Some of these require working with our Illinois State Board of Education and Regional Office of Education.
- The superintendent’s office will remain open but with reduced hours during the duration of this closure. Please call ahead to ensure someone is here when you arrive.

On another note, I know this can prove to be a difficult time for working parents. Just know that I’ve been thinking about the ramifications of this and I realize how hard that’s going to be. However, this is an unprecedented situation and I hope, as the experts say, this can help “flatten the curve” of the cases of COVID-19.

Another thing I ask of all students and parents is to take the learning activities the teachers send home seriously. While we understand there is nothing that can replace the rigor of being in the classroom, it is important that students keep their mind engaged with more than Netflix and Fortnite, I am guilty of this myself. Not knowing when we will return it is

important to keep students engaged in learning. If your students complete the activities, and you would like more, I'm sure your child's teacher can help you with this if necessary. Feel free to email them or call the district office and we can get a message to them.

Also, my suggestion is for everyone to take the recommendations of our country's and state leaders seriously. If they are requiring schools to close their doors for an extended period of time, then we should be following their instructions, including the practice of social distancing. Finally, enjoy this time together as families. We are in an unprecedented situation. If we are going to be forced to be with our loved ones, my suggestion is to appreciate that time together.

Sincerely,

Donna Veile