

Decorah Community School District
School Closure Morning Update
March 16, 2020



Good Morning,

This morning the following Decorah Community School District staff met to engage in initial conversations regarding the governor's recommended four-week school closure.

- Mark Lane, Superintendent
- Cathy Dietzenbach, Director of Business Services
- Kurt DeVore, Director of Information, Systems, & Instructional Technology
- Dana Bockman, Facilitator of Assessment and Instruction
- Lois Kuennen, CAO Administrative Assistant
- Darlene Woodhouse, Director of Human Resources
- Kristi Roffman, Nutrition Services Administrative Assistant
- Jim Samuelson, Transportation Director
- Greg Schaller, Custodial, Maintenance, & Grounds Director
- Chad Elliott, Nutrition Services Director
- Kim Sheppard, DHS Principal
- Adam Riley, DHS Associate Principal/Activities Director
- Justin Albers, DMS Principal
- Jake Nimrod, DMS Associate Principal/Activities Director
- Sarah Tobiason, CLE Principal
- Rick Varney, WSECC/JCE Principal
- Julie Goedken, School Nurse
- Sarah Elsbernd, Facilitator of Special Education

The team worked through the following agenda items:

- Questions and Anticipated Questions
- Potential Come and Go Day for Students and Families
- Nutrition Services Options During Closure
- Next Steps

We started our meeting individually generating questions that we need to answer in order to manage this situation well. We then began developing initial possible approaches and scenarios.

At this point, we need to receive additional guidance and direction from the Iowa Department of Education, the Governor's Office, and the Iowa Legislature to know which approaches will meet the needs of our community, and will align with Iowa Code.

Here are some things we do know now.

District facilities are closed for school and all activities until further notice. There will be no open gyms, no park and rec use, no community use, no use of district facilities including classrooms, gyms, weight rooms, and/or fields. **At this time no one should be at school unless it is at the direction of a district administrator.**

We are in the planning phases of an organized and managed day, or days, when students and families will have access to their school to collect personal belongings. This day will include access to district issued technology for home use. The DCSD tech team is meeting as I write this message discussing needs and processes for making this happen.

We are already planning for how we might provide breakfast and/or lunch options for students. More information will be coming as plans are finalized.

We know other states are allowing schools to move to online learning options. Current Iowa law does not allow for online learning to count as student instructional time. This may be something Governor Reynolds and the Iowa Legislature address today, or in the next few days. My hope is that we will have a better understanding of the viability of this option by the end of the day tomorrow.

At this time, I cannot answer questions about make-up days in June. If there is no change to Iowa law, or no plan for all or a portion of time missed to be forgiven, I expect we will need to make up the lost instructional time in the same way we make up for lost days due to weather. I need more information from Governor Reynolds and the Iowa Legislature, and the department of education to know how we will be moving forward with make-up days.

Any IEP meetings scheduled for the next few days will be cancelled and rescheduled. We will reassess after we learn more from the department of education and our AEA partners.

I am expecting a press conference by the governor at some point today. Keystone AEA superintendents will enter a Zoom meeting immediately following that press conference, and the team listed above is scheduled to meet again at 3:00 pm this afternoon.

If I did not answer a specific question you have, please feel free to email, but please be understanding that it will take time for me to get to individual responses. You can expect additional communication this afternoon or evening after we learn more.

We know we have been presented with an unprecedented opportunity to serve our community well. No group of Decorah educators have ever been asked to do what we are being asked to do. Please know we will embrace this with a mindset of service excellence. We will work to do what is best for our students, families, and staff.

Thanks for your patience, and thank you for your support of Decorah Schools.
Mark M. Lane, Superintendent of Schools.