

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

Dear PCSD 25 staff and families:

Today, the PCSD 25 Board of Trustees voted to continue remote learning for the duration of the school year. Our goal has always been to deliver a remote learning plan that would not require an extension to the school year, pending an approved attendance waiver from the Idaho State Board of Education. We also have a mandated responsibility to move learning forward so our learners are prepared to come back to school in the fall.



The weight of these decisions has not been taken lightly. We continue to collaborate with official agencies to guide these important decisions. The Southeastern Idaho Public Health Department provided this statement for us to share with you from Director Maggie Mann: “In the interest of continuing to keep the incidence of COVID-19 cases low in the Pocatello/Chubbuck areas, Southeastern Idaho Public Health recommends and supports PCSD 25’s continuation of remote learning for the remainder of this school year. We recognize this situation presents challenges for learners, families, and teachers, but we believe it is the healthiest and safest option for the long run.”

Our hope in making this decision now is to provide clarity and certainty while enhancing continuity of learning in the coming weeks. We know this has been a difficult time for our learners, their families and our staff. Reopening our doors at this point with so much uncertainty remaining would add another monumental disruption to learning. We are confident this decision was made in the best interest of our learners’, our staff members’, and our community’s health, safety, and peace of mind.

For those of you with graduating seniors, we understand the question on your mind is, “will there be graduation ceremonies for the Class of 2020?” At this time, it is unclear if or when Idaho State University’s Holt Arena will be reopened for public events. Currently, ISU is closed to events until May 15. The continuation or lifting of Governor Little’s stay at home order will also impact this decision. We are working together with our administration and student leadership from each high school. If it is not possible to hold traditional graduation ceremonies, we will develop alternate methods to celebrate this important milestone. This decision will be made by May 1.

To recap:

- We will continue to provide remote learning and essential services to move learning forward through May 28, 2020, the end of the 2019/2020 academic school calendar.
- We will continue to provide grab-and-go lunch and breakfast until further notice.
- The Board of Trustees also voted to hold off on making a decision regarding athletics and activities pending recommendations expected from IHSAA on Friday, April 17.
- Parents/guardians should expect to hear from teachers and school administrators about how learners can pick up their personal items from school buildings.

This is not the end of the school year we imagined; however, our Board of Trustees, Superintendent, district administrators, building principals, teachers and support staff continue to be dedicated to creating the best educational opportunities possible for our learners. We are grateful for your patience and your understanding. This truly has been a time for all of us to do MORE together and we are extraordinarily proud of what we have been able to accomplish as a District family during this unconventional time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Douglas Howell, Superintendent