

4/16/2020

Dear Families,

It is with a heavy heart that I share with you that because of COVID-19, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services has extended the Safer at Home Order until 8:00 A.M. on Tuesday, May 26, 2020, and has just announced all schools and extracurricular activities will remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

What does this mean for our Portage Community School District students and families?

1. We will continue to provide educational opportunities as we have been for the past few weeks.
2. Middle and high school students taking high school accredited classes will need to continue meeting the expectations to pass their classes so they receive credit, or they will have to earn the necessary credits required for graduation by repeating these classes.
3. Teachers will continue to check in with their students or family members and have times for you to contact them if you have questions.
4. The district will continue to provide meals to our students with deliveries every Monday and Thursday for as long as we are able or until school would have ended.
5. We are in the process of looking into all available options for our senior graduation ceremony and will relay plans to those directly affected as plans are finalized.
6. The WIAA will determine what this means for spring sports. When we know, we will send out a message.
7. Each school will let you know when students' items from their lockers are ready for pick-up.

This is a difficult situation for all of us, but it is not impossible. We will continue to work together to provide the best options for our students that we can.

Please continue to check in with your child(ren) and their teachers. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to us. We are here to support you and your family through this uncertain time. Visit our website for updates, resources, optional schedules, and additional learning opportunities often.

Know that we miss your child(ren) and we were hoping to be back with them in the classroom sooner rather than later. Most importantly, we are in this together and we will get through it together.

Sincerely,

Margaret Rudolph

April 3, 2020

As we complete the second week of learning and following the State's Safer at Home initiative, I want to take a moment to first thank you. Thank you for all of your efforts during this unprecedented time. The Portage Community School District teachers and staff miss seeing your children in the classroom. We miss hearing their laughter on the playgrounds. We miss seeing them excel on the athletic fields, in the auditoriums during concerts, plays and special programs, and just hanging out with each other during lunch breaks and in the hallways between classes.

The administrative team is in contact with the PCSD teachers and staff, and the teachers and staff are in contact with you and/or your children on a regular basis. The last two weeks we delivered over 8,000 meals, which included breakfast and lunch, to families via bus routes and area pick-up locations. We have worked together these first two weeks, and we will continue to do so.

As we continue forward, I want to touch base with you regarding some changes that will occur.

The first change will be breakfast and lunch deliveries. In order to minimize exposure when having families come each day to pick-up or wait for food to be delivered, we will be changing our delivery schedule. We will continue the same delivery system, bus and pick-up locations and times however we will only deliver on Mondays and Thursdays. Monday's delivery will include 3 days worth of meals and Thursday's delivery will be 2 days worth of meals. This change will go into effect next week, beginning Monday, April 6, 2020.

If you have your child(ren)'s food service payments set up to automatically deduct from your banking account and you wish to stop this, please log into your Infinite Campus Account to suspend it.

We have also developed the District's Guidance for Grading and Graduation Requirements, for the Spring 2020 semester, for students earning high school credits. This changes our current grading system to a pass/fail grading practice. This is how the pass/fail system will work for students earning high school credits:

PCSD Guidance for Grading and Graduation Requirements During COVID-19 School Closure

Grading Practices:

Grades 7 - 12 Students Taking High School Accredited Courses

- Pass/Fail: A pass/fail grading system will be used second semester (Spring 2020) for all high school courses taken by students in grades 7-12. The reasons why we are moving to pass/fail this semester are:

- Determination of a pass/fail standard of grading can be made more effective in a distance learning setting - especially since online participation and feedback are the only forms of measurement in this form of digital learning.

- A pass/fail model preserves credit attainment for students and makes adjustments to graduation requirements during this unprecedented time.

- The most vulnerable students in school settings remain the most vulnerable students in distance learning settings.

- Protecting the academic progress and advancement of all students who are negatively impacted by access and opportunity gaps exacerbated by distance learning requires a shift in grading practices.

- Determination of Pass/Fail: Participation and engagement in essential standards covered in learning opportunities and enrichment activities during the second semester (Spring 2020) will be factored in with grades received prior to school closure.

- Pass = Student adequately participated and engaged in essential standards covered in learning opportunities and enrichment activities during the second semester (Spring 2020).

- Fail = Student did not adequately participate and engage in essential standards covered in learning opportunities and enrichment activities during the second semester (Spring 2020).

- GPA: Implications of moving to a pass/fail grading system for the second semester (Spring 2020).

- Pass/fail will freeze GPA as it stands after the first semester of the 2019-2020 school year.

- Second-semester (Spring 2020) pass/fail grades will not impact GPA.

Grades 4K-8

Portage Community School District administration and teaching staff strongly encourage all students to participate in learning activities and enrichment provided. Every effort has been made to ensure that students will receive feedback and opportunities to demonstrate continued learning.

Due to state graduation credit requirements, only students taking high school courses will earn Pass/Fail grades for Second Semester (Spring 2020).

All Wisconsin schools will remain closed for the duration of the public health emergency. We will not be returning to school until Governor Evers makes an announcement to do so. We will, however, continue to provide learning opportunities, activities and options to best assist you in helping your child(ren) stay focused and active until we can be with them again in the classroom.

Thank you for your patience and flexibility during this ever-changing situation.

Sincerely,

Margaret Rudolph

March 18, 2020

Dear Families,

Thank you for your patience and flexibility during this ever-changing situation. I have outlined a few important topics for your information.

All Wisconsin schools are now closed for the duration of the public health emergency. We will not be returning to school until Governor Evers makes an announcement to do so. Therefore, we do not know how long this will be. The District will be asking for a Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction waiver for the minutes of instruction requirement. At this time, we are first planning to provide free breakfast and lunch to students and then instructional opportunities. We have not yet planned for locker clean-out of students' personal items. We know you and other families may have many questions about things like classes, graduation, and other issues. When we have more guidance from the state and/or new information, we will share that with you.

Beginning Monday, March 23, 2020, 4k and kindergarten through fifth grade students have their learning opportunity packets which were sent home prior to spring break. This will assist them for two weeks. If your child was absent, we are mailing them their packet. Students in 6th through 12th grades will be able to use their Chromebooks to access learning opportunities from their teachers. Homeroom/Advisory teachers will reach out to you and/or your children next week.

In order to best meet your needs regarding food service, technology/internet, and basic school supplies, we are asking each family to fill out the following survey after you read the information below. Survey Link: <https://forms.gle/9NSWDACNE3yND65B9>

Breakfast/Lunch Service:

We are committed to providing food service for our children. We will be providing food from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. beginning Monday, March 23, 2020. Food will be available Monday through Friday, except Friday, April 10th. No children will be turned away, even if they do not attend one of our schools. Each child requesting meals through the survey, 18 years old and younger, will receive a FREE lunch and breakfast for the next morning. Please know that due to the circumstances, there will be limited availability for those with dietary needs, including gluten-free and allergies and we cannot leave food unattended for food safety reasons. We will have two options for food delivery.

Food Delivery

- Option 1: Students who regularly ride a bus - Food will be delivered by bus, Monday through Friday, (except Friday, April 10th) EXCEPT for stops at Lincoln Park, Sanborn Park, Cattail Park, Adams/Marion Stop and St. Mary's. Buses will run routes to deliver food for your child(ren) at their normal bus stop location. Please plan on meeting the bus sometime between 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. For the first few days, we will call you prior to your stop so you will know a more approximate time to be waiting for the bus. Our bus routes are being combined for delivery purposes. One healthy person should come to the bus to pick up the food for your child(ren). You will need to pick up your food in person as we cannot leave food unattended at your regular bus drop-off location for food safety reasons.
- Option 2: Students who normally get picked up at Lincoln Park, Sanborn Park, Adams/Marion Street Stop, St. Mary's, St. John's, and Howard/Jackson Street Apartments and all other students who do not regularly ride the bus can pick up food at the locations listed below between 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Monday-Friday (except Friday, April 10th). You can drive up or walk up to pick up your child(ren)'s food. If a person is walking up for food, please only send one healthy person to pick up the food for the family and stop at the designated area. We want to keep a social distance of 6 feet between people.
 - St. Mary's*
 - St. John's* (Cattail Park's new pick-up location)
 - Howard/Jackson Street Apartments* (Lincoln Park's new pick-up location)
 - Sanborn Park*

*The above locations will have a bus parked at the food pick-up location.
- Rusch Elementary School: Drive-up available from the back parking lot; enter on DeWitt Street. Walk-up available in the front of the school (Rusch is also the Adams/Marion Street Stop location or alternative Lincoln Park location)
- Woodridge Primary School: Drive-up/pick-up in front of building

For further updates, we are using the [Portage Community School District Website](#). Please note that we will only have essential personnel working to limit exposure, so no one will be available to answer the phones. Please email your building principal with any questions.

Sincerely,

Margaret Rudolph

March 13, 2020

Dear Families,

Late this afternoon, Gov. Tony Evers directed the Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary to issue an agency order mandating the statewide closure of all K-12 schools, public and private, as part of the state's efforts to respond to and contain the spread of COVID-19 in Wisconsin. The anticipated reopening date is April 6, 2020; however, the reopening date is subject to change pending further information.

"Closing our schools is not a decision I made lightly, but keeping our kids, our educators, our families, and our communities safe is a top priority as we continue our work to respond to and prevent further spread of COVID-19 in Wisconsin," said Gov. Evers.

Earlier today, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services reported 11 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the state's total to 19 cases, including one individual who has recovered.

"Kids and families across Wisconsin often depend on our schools to access food and care," Gov. Evers continued. "We are going to continue working to do everything we can to ensure kids and families have the resources and support they need while schools are closed."

Decisions about the implementation of other community measures will be made by state and local officials based on CDC and DHS guidance, as well as the scope of the outbreak.

People should follow simple steps to prevent illness and avoid exposure to this virus including:

- Frequent and thorough handwashing with soap and water;
- Covering coughs and sneezes;
- Avoiding touching your face;
- Staying home when sick.

Recently the DHS released new guidance for mass gatherings and travel, which can be found at the DHS website linked below.

This is a rapidly-evolving situation and we encourage you and the public to frequently monitor the DHS website for updates. Additional information can be found on the CDC website.

We will be working to answer the questions of how to provide food and resources while school is not in session. School closing means there will be no sports or extracurricular activities, including practices, until school resumes. As more information becomes available, we will provide further updates.

Thank you for your understanding during these uncertain times.

Margaret

March 12, 2020

Dear Families,

Spring break is next week (March 16-20). I know some of you may be traveling during spring break. The recent COVID-19 has caused concerns about travel and the return back home and to school. I want to provide you with links related to traveling from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO). These resources continue to be updated on a regular basis. If you find yourself in an area that is or may be identified as an area with widespread or ongoing community spread or Warning Level 3 area, the CDC recommends self-quarantine for 14 days upon returning. If you do find your family in this situation, please contact the district office at 608-742-4879 extension 4007, so we can plan for your child(ren)'s continued education during this time. This will help us reduce the risk of spreading any illness.

Our custodial staff are taking additional cleaning precautions, including all high-touch areas and we are installing additional hand sanitizing stations. The district is also monitoring recommendations from public health agencies regarding cleaning methods, equipment, and supplies to better assist our efforts to discourage the spread of any illnesses.

Administrators will be meeting during spring break to work on contingency plans to meet our responsibility to educate our students by transitioning instruction from classroom to virtual instruction that satisfies DPI and CDC requirements and prevents the need to extend the school year into the summer. At this time, I do not have more details.

We are asking all secondary students (grades 6-12) to bring their Chromebooks and charging cables home with them over spring break so we are prepared should we need to be.

Wisconsin school districts are working closely with the Department of Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and the Department of Administration, as well as our local health department, for updates.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel:

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

Communication Resources for Travelers:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/communication-resources.html>

World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations for international traffic in relation to COVID-19 outbreak:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/updated-who-recommendations-for-international-traffic-in-relation-to-covid-19-outbreak/>

Wisconsin Department of Health Services:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/covid-19.htm>

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and understanding. The COVID-19 situation is constantly evolving and changing. We understand there is uncertainty involved in this situation, and plan to keep you as informed as possible.

Enjoy your spring break.

Margaret Rudolph

District Administrator

Portage Community School District

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has posted detailed guidelines regarding the prevention of spreading respiratory diseases such as COVID-19. The DPI, citing the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) recommendations, notes that families can also take the following preventative actions:

- 1) Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- 2) Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- 3) Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

4) Cover your cough or sneeze by coughing or sneezing into a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash.

5) Stay home or keep your children home if sick – if you have a fever, do not return to school or work until you and/or they are fever free for 24 hours.

6) Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

The DPI and CDC do not recommend that schools or districts require students or staff to wear masks or gloves, or cancel activities or classes.

The PCSD nursing staff is continually monitoring our student and adult health situations and is in communication with county and state health officials to ensure the overall safety of our students and staff in regards to not only the COVID-19 virus but other respiratory illnesses as well.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has been posting daily updates regarding COVID-19 to their website (<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/>) for those interested in staying as up to date as possible on testing results within the state.