

April 23, 2020: District email

Good afternoon district families and staff members,

Governor Walz announced today, April 23, that the Distance Learning Period will be extended for all Minnesota schools through the end of the 2019-20 academic year due to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) health crisis.

We know the governor's [Executive Order 20-41](#) to close school for the rest of the school year presents a challenge to our families. Our district has been anticipating this possibility all along and will continue to work diligently to partner with you in furthering your child's education and well-being. We want to thank you for your continued flexibility and collaboration in making this Distance Learning Period successful. It couldn't be done without each and every one of you, and I'm so proud of the work we've been able to do together thus far.

Please find important information below in relation to the Distance Learning Period extension:

Distance Learning to Continue

Although our school buildings are to remain closed, distance learning will continue through the remainder of the school year. We will continue to adjust and administer our virtual learning plans and expectations, provide student services and resources to the best of our ability including offering Community Care - Tier 1 & Tier 2 Childcare, distributing free meals to our students and providing families with technology assistance.

We are also working on plans to address any potential learning gaps that may occur during remote learning, including with our youngest learners.

White Bear Lake Area Schools is partnering with individual families to ensure all have the services they need. Teachers and case managers will continue to work with individual families to provide remote learning opportunities that are as closely aligned to the students' individual needs as possible during these times of exceptional circumstances.

Staff Availability

Our school district staff will continue to provide meals, support, and distance learning opportunities to our students for the rest of the school year. During scheduled school days, our teachers will continue to be available via email and hold office hours to support our parents and students. Teachers and building principals will continue to share their remote learning plans and expectations with parents and students on an ongoing basis.

Our teachers and building administrators will continue to work with families with limited or no access to the Internet to ensure assignments are shared.

Administrators will also continue to work remotely and will continue to return emails and voicemails on scheduled school days.

Retrieving Personal Items from Schools During Office Hours

District school buildings will have consistent office days and hours of Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-4 p.m. Buildings will be locked, so families should continue to reach out to building principals to arrange for at-school pick-up of materials during this window of time. Staff will be checking and responding to their emails and voicemails.

High School Graduation

White Bear Lake Area High School administrators are working with members of the senior class to create a plan for Honoring 2020 graduates. An update will be provided to the School Board at the April 27, 2020 Work-Study Meeting.

Family Supports

We recognize the importance of consistent and continued care for our students who access our school-based mental health programming. Our professionals are reaching out to families to ensure they have open lines of communication during the closure and to make alternative plans if necessary. Our counselors will be monitoring emails and reaching out to our school families in need. Please find important supports below that are available to families:

- **Free Meal Distribution** - Food service operations are ongoing despite the extended school closure and will remain in place throughout the remainder of the school year. Staff will continue to comply with the most current health guidelines when distributing meals. Visit the [district's website](#) for more information on our district's meal distribution program.
- **Bear Care Mental Wellness Support Line** - The Free Bear Care Mental Wellness Support Line is now available to connect parents to resources that can meet the mental wellness needs of their children ages birth-age 21. [Learn more](#).
- **Bear Care Services** - The Free Bear Care Health & Wellness Clinic is open to all district students (birth-age 21). Please call 651-653-2923 or email [BearCare@stkate.edu](mailto: BearCare@stkate.edu) to schedule an appointment. Services that will be available include health assessment/physical exams, rapid strep throat testing and treatment, ear infection checks and more.
- **Support Hub** - The [Support Hub](#) is a resource available on the district's website to provide families with necessary information to address barriers and enhance well-being. This support gives families and community members access to information for essential services including crisis response, basic needs, mental health and well-being, physical health, social emotional learning and more.

If a student or parent is in crisis, you can Text MN to 741741 for the Minnesota suicide and mental health crisis text line. These services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Requesting an interpreter

Find [more information](#) about requesting a call with an interpreter in the language your family speaks.

School Board Meetings

In light of Governor Walz's Stay at Home Executive Orders issued on Wednesday, March 25, the White Bear Lake Area School Board will be meeting by electronic means under Minnesota Statutes 13D.021. During the time that the School Board is meeting by electronic means, those who would like to provide comments during Regular Meetings may submit their comments using the White Bear Lake Area Schools - Public Forum Comments form linked to the posted meeting agendas. Public Forum Comments will be read during the meeting. Public Forum will be open up to 30 minutes (3 minutes per speaker, 10 minutes per topic, no more than 3 speakers per topic as a general rule). Comments should be brief, and repetition of public comments already expressed at the same meeting should be avoided. Comments will be read in the order they were received.

School Board Meetings that take place by electronic means will be available in livestream. Information about how to watch the meeting via livestream can be found the day of the meetings on the district website's event calendar and on the School Board [Meeting Materials page](#), where agendas, Board packets and information about upcoming meetings can be found.

District Playgrounds Remain Closed

In following the lead of our municipality partners, all school district playgrounds continue to be closed to the public. We will inform the community when district playgrounds have reopened. The district's outdoor green spaces remain open and provide a great place to keep kids active. With more and more children heading outside, we ask you to remind your children to continue to practice social distancing and should:

- Avoid team sports, group activities and shared sporting equipment.
- Avoid crowded parks and trails.

Additional best-practice protocols also include:

- Stay home if you are sick
- Wash your hands frequently
- Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and others
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands

Find additional information [here](#).

Scheduled Spring/Summer Events

All field trips, overnight trips, performances and award programs have been canceled through the remainder of the school year. Schools will be in contact with families about how parent-teacher conferences are being offered via electronic means.

All Minnesota State High School League activities and athletics that occur during the spring season have been canceled for the 2019-20 school year

The district has refunded fees that have been collected for middle school and high school spring activities. Community Services and Recreation Department enrichment activities and programs are canceled through the school year at this time. Virtual options for programming are being explored

and offered online as available. The department will continue to share updated communication online, by email, and through our social media outlets.

Summer Programming

White Bear Lake Area Schools' summer programs are actively exploring new and innovative ways to deliver programming options based on a variety of scenarios. Decisions will be made as we receive further guidance from the State and more information will be shared about these programs as we receive it. Keep up to date on current information on our [Community Services & Recreation Updates](#) webpage.

Kindergarten Registration and Enrollment for 2020-2021

While the Distance Learning Period has been extended, it is important to note that registration and enrollment is still open for the 2020-21 school year. Visit the [district's website](#) to learn more about the enrollment process. If you have any questions, please call the Centralized Enrollment Center at 651-407-7674.

Status of 2020-21 School Year

No specific decisions have been made at this time on the status of our buildings reopening in September. The state will continue to monitor the status of the COVID-19 outbreak and our ability to resume normal activities.

For More Information

The dedicated [COVID-19 Updates page](#) on our website includes all school announcements, resources, an FAQ and additional resources. This information can also be found in [Spanish](#).

For all questions related to your child's assignments, please email your child's teacher or the building principal.

We appreciate your support and know that we will continue to work together as a school community to navigate through these challenging times together.

Sincerely,

Dr. Wayne Kazmierczak, Superintendent