



# BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

## District moves forward with virtual graduation in May Seniors will receive caps and gowns prior to the event

Superintendent Reid Newey told the Board of Education of the Davis School District at a recent board workshop that virtual ceremonies for all high schools will replace traditional graduations.

After receiving input from high school principals, students and staff, Secondary School Director Dr. Dan Linford said other options such as a drive-in, parades or ceremonies on football fields, were considered.

The ultimate decision came down to the health and safety of everyone involved and delivering diplomas on time.

“Most of those options don’t meet health department requirements. We’ve been told (by the Davis County Health Department) that in-person gatherings will not be allowed,” said Linford.

“As we looked at projections even over the next few months, none of those projections would suggest that we could have gatherings, so we didn’t feel like moving forward with those things would be appropriate at this time.”

The district plans to make the virtual ceremony as much like a traditional graduation as possible in terms of structure.

Speeches will be prerecorded by student representatives, principals and a board member representative. Schools may also add in highlight videos or musical numbers.

Prior to the event, seniors will be invited to the school in a controlled environment to receive their caps and gowns, get professional pictures taken and record a short,

personal message that will be shown during the virtual ceremony.

Students will then have the option to take home their caps and gowns for a few weeks to allow for additional pictures.

Linford pointed out that high school principals were “really going to war for their students.”

Linford added, “We revisited the idea of a live ceremony because they feel it personally, but we landed on this spot because times have pushed us here, so now we want to make it as great as possible”

“If things change dramatically, our district is very agile and could make adjustments, but our plan going forward is to have a very strong virtual graduation.”

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## District restructures fourth-quarter grading and attendance

The district has implemented a new grading and attendance process for grades seven through 12 during the last quarter of the year in response to COVID-19 and remote learning.

Traditional letter grades will still be given to students explained Assistant Superintendent Dr. Logan Toone during a recent Board of Education workshop.

Parents will also have the option to request a passing (P) grade for

their students through myDSD in place of letter grades A through D-.

The P grade will not affect a student’s grade point average, but will generate credit towards graduation or course advancement.

An F grade will not be given to students during the fourth quarter. Instead, an incomplete (I) grade will be issued.

The I grade will not yield graduation credit, so the class would need to be remediated if the course is

required for graduation.

“What we are doing is essentially giving a kid who has been unsuccessful in the remote setting an opportunity for us to say, ‘We understand you didn’t ask for this, this is not something you signed up for, we had to change things midcourse,’ so this is what we feel is an appropriate level of consideration relative to grading procedures,” said Toone.

Attendance has also been ad-

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justed for the fourth term. The district has suspended all citizenship grades during fourth term and students' records will not reflect class participation levels.

Classes are internally monitoring student participation levels so teachers can see which students are struggling. Currently, 83% of students are participating in the remote learning experience.

Toone told the board that the state has suspended Rise and Aspire Plus testing, as well as Dibels end-of-year testing. The state is confident the government will approve a waiver of accountability that is currently being reviewed by the federal government to avoid any penalties.

Toone also mentioned that any student who didn't have the ability to take the makeup ACT test at the end of March will receive a voucher to take the test later.

Advanced Placement tests will be given remotely in early May. The exams have also been adjusted to an open-note, open-book format.

"The last few weeks has required a complete redesign and rethinking of our instructional approach," said Toone.

"I've never seen a group of people who've been more flexible, who've been more understanding, who've linked arms and said, 'We are in this together,' than our group of 4,000 teachers in our school district."

## Davis Learns Together plan moving into next phase

Superintendent Reid Newey says the district is moving from the urgent phase of the Davis Learns Together plan into the stabilization phase. Schools will begin outlining school check-out procedures and evaluate learning gaps.

Newey also told school board members that May 15 will be the end of new instruction for students, followed by a week of catch-up work and individualized instruction with teachers as needed.

The final week in May will consist of further wrap-up and equipment check-in procedures, with very limited instruction for students. Teachers will receive additional remote learning training.

"We really want to prepare for a solid plan moving forward, so it will be a time of training for teachers to further enhance their confidence and ability for whatever they feel they need in terms of support for the fall," said Newey.

"News reports anticipate the winter flu season to be worse than it's been this spring in terms of dealing with COVID," said Newey.

"Worst case scenario, we want to anticipate periodic closure, so we want teachers to feel confident and administrators and families to be confident in our ability to continue to deliver learning."

## GRADUATION, from Pg. 1

"We certainly want to balance that with taking the time and proper respect and feelings of gratitude that we have in honoring our students, but both of those need to be weighed against the health crisis that is upon us."

In other workshop business, the board learned:

- The district will receive approximately \$4.7 million from the federal CARES Act to help with funding expenditures related to the COVID-19 response, such as sanitation, technology and internet hot spots.

- Plans are moving forward with the district's new CTE center. The district is currently working with

architects to design learning spaces for students.

Programs at the CTE center will include audio engineering, medical assisting, pharmacy technician and unmanned aerial systems.

- The Student and Family Resources Department continues to provide resources during the district-wide school soft closure.

Child welfare, federal programs and special education services have also continued, in addition to providing child care for first responders.

- Construction for the two homes being built by CTE construction students was suspended during the

soft closure.

Students will resume construction during the fall semester with the next group of students while current students work with local home builders for additional hands-on experience.

- Architectural and construction projects have been accelerated since students aren't in school. Work continues on Sunburst Elementary in Layton and West Bountiful Elementary.

- Grab-and-go lunch and breakfast continues at 49 schools in the district. So far, 360,971 meals have been provided. A lunch bus is running for six schools.