



April 3, 2020

Hornet Nation,

The right words are very hard to come by as our school, community, state, nation and the entire world are faced with unprecedented circumstances. Pellston Public Schools sends every student, parent and community member our love as you all deal with the challenges of this pandemic. We hope that you are healthy, staying positive, practicing social distancing and doing the very best you can in a very difficult situation. If you need us, if we can assist in any way, please reach out to myself or any of our dedicated staff and we will do all we can to assist you.

The Governor's Executive Order is the very last thing we wanted to take place this school year, we miss our students more than you could possibly imagine. However, the health and safety of our community is the very most important thing at this moment in history. We have a new set of obstacles to overcome and I'm confident that if we all work together we can be remarkable. I've been amazed during my first year at Pellston Public Schools that this community can do anything it puts its mind to.

We have already begun work on our plan for remote/distance learning that is due for approval from Char-Em ISD no later than April 28. The application just came out this afternoon but I'm confident we will have it submitted and approved next week. Our goal is to have this plan fully operational by April 20 but I believe that start date will be sooner. We know the challenges that beautiful Northern Michigan provides with internet connectivity. Our plan will provide learning options for all families whether that be online, paper pencil delivered by our buses or through the mail, or lessons provided on jump drives. We will work hard to come up with a solution that will work for all. Due to the generosity and support of our voters with the passage of our Sinking Fund Millage last month I was able to order additional devices yesterday. All Pellston Public Schools students will soon have their own device at home for distance learning.

A clear part of the Governor's Executive Order is that no family will be negatively affected by this distance learning. All students will be promoted to the next grade level. All state testing such as the M-STEP has been canceled for this year. We know that all of our families are dealing with very different circumstances at this time. We will look to provide the very best education we possibly can but we will also be very conscious of the stress that could provide. Grading will be suspended for the remainder of the year and all learning is encouraged but optional.

Undoubtedly there will be a loss of learning due to this closure. We will look to continue additional instruction and supports over the summer above and beyond what we have already provided in the past. Keep in mind that every student in the nation is facing these very same challenges. When we return to school in the Fall we will continue to meet every child where they are academically and do an amazing job providing them instruction to catch them back up.

My heart goes out during this time to a very special group, our seniors. We are deeply sorry that your last days in our district were cut short. Know how loved you are, how proud we are for all of your accomplishments and that you have most certainly left your mark in the Hornet Nation. If you were on

track for graduation the Executive Order allows us the ability to provide you the honor of graduating from Pellston Public Schools. If you were not on track Mr. Bacon and Mrs. Dilworth will be working closely with you to get you across that finish line. When it is safe to do so, you have my promise that the Class of 2020 will be having the best graduation Pellston Public Schools has ever seen, a prom and anything else you would like to work together to make happen.

MHSAA released today that all winter and spring sports have been canceled for this year. My heart aches for all of our athletes that have worked so hard to shine while proudly wearing brown and gold. I have no doubt our boys basketball team would have added another district trophy to the case this year. All of our athletes should be forever proud of all that you have accomplished. Being angry and bitter won't get you very far in this world. Keep your heads held high, stay positive, keep moving forward.

We are so thankful we are able to continue to provide meals to our families during this time. We will continue to provide meals outside the elementary school from 12:00-1:00 on Tuesdays and Fridays. The past two times we have distributed over 1,000 meals.

The health and safety of our staff during this time has been of the highest priority to me and will continue to be. During this stay at home order only administration and food service staff have been allowed in the building. We are working on a plan to allow staff in the building next week to gather materials so they can provide distance learning to our students. Administration and teachers will be reaching out to you next week as we finalize our plan moving forward.

Special education services provided to our students from Char-Em will resume after April 28. Special education services provided by our district will resume to the best of our ability when our plan officially begins.

I know that we have many questions during these challenging times. Information changes rapidly and we are doing our very best to keep you informed of what is taking place. If you have questions or concerns never hesitate to reach out to me via phone call or email.

Stay positive Hornet Nation. I have no doubt we will get through this together. Hug our students from us all, we love and miss them!

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