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Dear Students, Parent/Guardians, and friends,

Thank you for your patience as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic! This communication is intended to provide new information for parents of WPSD.

### **How long will schools remain closed?**

On Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> Governor Wolf and the PA Secretary of Education announced that all Pennsylvania schools shall remain closed until at least April 6 with further re-evaluation of the situation at that time. The announcement included guidance that, as of now, teachers and administrators may return to schools on April 7 for two days of preparation before students would be permitted to return on April 9, at the earliest.

### **How does this affect Spring Break scheduled for April 9 through April 13?**

In keeping with the Board-approved WPSD academic calendar, although the Governor advised that students may return to school on April 9, the District recognizes that Spring Break is scheduled during the annual observance of religious holidays such as Passover and Easter, and we want to respect the fact that school has historically not been in session on Good Friday. Therefore, the earliest that WPSD students would return to school is Tuesday, April 14; however, this is contingent upon the State giving permission for schools to return to school. Teachers would be utilizing April 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> for professional development to prepare for the students return. We will update you as decisions are made. The District plans to have the buildings thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before April 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **When will my child receive his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> marking period report card?**

The marking period was originally scheduled to end on March 27<sup>th</sup>, however, due to these unprecedented events, third marking period grades will be pulled on April 17<sup>th</sup>. All new assignments that are given from March 27<sup>th</sup> onward will be counted towards the fourth marking period. Report cards will be issued sometime during the week of April 20<sup>th</sup> (exact date to be determined).

### **What is the District's plan for continuity of education now that the closure has been extended through April 8<sup>th</sup>?**

Pennsylvania Department of Education released an update on Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> stating that Continuity of Education is important for students to continue to have the opportunity to develop and maintain skills while away from the customary school environment. This can be achieved through Planned Instruction, Enrichment and Review, or a combination thereof.

- 1. Planned Instruction:** Planned Instruction is formal teaching and learning similar to that which occurs in a classroom setting. Within this process, teachers use planned courses of instruction of new concepts/skills aligned to grade level standards.
- 2. Enrichment and Review:** Enrichment and Review consists of informal activities that reinforce or extend students' prior learning. New standards and skills are not addressed through Enrichment and Review.

Beginning next week, K -12 counselors, school nurses, and school psychologists will be available via Meet by appointment for any students who need to “check-in” for their own mental health and well-being. These professionals meet regularly with many of our students in the brick-and-mortar setting, so with available technology, these supportive services will be made available to our students. Students (and/or parents) may wish to reach out to these professionals via email to make arrangements for online meetings.

Special education teachers have the most challenging role in providing services to their students in an online capacity, but WPSD is committed to doing whatever it can to provide continuity of education to its special needs students during this extraordinary time. Please reach out to your child’s special education teacher via email with questions. Teachers and other related service providers will be reaching out to parents and students to talk about how continuity of education can be facilitated using available technology. Teachers will also be in touch with parents regarding upcoming IEP meetings that may be conducted virtually.

The focus for the next few days of the school closure is on educational continuity; not grades! The teachers will continue posting enrichment and remediation activities on their websites. Even though we feel these activities are important, the District also recognizes the need to begin instructing during this closure. Administrators and teachers will be working cooperatively to develop learning plans in core subjects. The goal is to begin offering instruction to the students in all settings in the very near future.

#### **Will Food Distribution continue through April 8<sup>th</sup>?**

The West Perry School District was recently approved for the Seamless Summer Program. This program allows us to continue serving lunches to our students throughout the closure. Approval for this program will cause a few changes with the Food Distribution procedures. **Starting Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup> Food Distribution will be once per week.** The distribution days will be Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup> and Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>. Students will be provided five days of lunches at one time. The District was only approved for two distribution sites. Those two sites will be **Blain Elementary and New Bloomfield Elementary**. These will be the only two pick-up locations for the district. Delivery will still be offered for those who cannot make it to a pick-up site. A new lunch survey will be available on the district website. Please complete this survey as soon as possible. You will be able to choose which location you will visit for pick-up on the survey. Please remember that students must be present to receive lunch.

The next Back Pack Program distribution will occur on Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>. Students who normally pick-up their backpacks at Carroll Elementary will be asked to go to New Bloomfield Elementary to receive them. If you did not pick-up your Back Pack that was available on Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, please contact your child’s building principal.

#### **Will any standardized tests be offered?**

The Pennsylvania Department of Education announced the cancellation of statewide assessments for the 2019-2020 school year, which includes PSSA, PASA, and Keystone Exams. PDE has also cancelled standardized testing for students in career and technical education (CTE) programs. These include exams from the National Occupational Competency Institute (NOCTI) and National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS).

**Am I permitted to enter the buildings to retrieve additional items?**

All buildings in the West Perry School District will be open on Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup> from 8AM – 12PM. Please report to the building's office and someone will assist you. We will be limiting the number of people in the building at one time. If you are asked to wait outside, please continue with Social Distancing practices. Please use this time to gather any additional curriculum, instrumental, or personal items that you may need.

I know the coming weeks may prove difficult in many ways, especially for our families with multiple children, working parents, and technology issues. At the heart of what we are trying to do for our children during the closure is to keep our community safe and our students engaged. I want to personally thank you for your support and partnership toward that goal. As this situation continues to evolve, I will provide additional updates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David M. Zula".

David M. Zula  
Superintendent of Schools  
West Perry School District