

April 1, 2020

Dear Students and Parents,

First allow me to tell you that I hope you are all safe, healthy, and appreciating the extra time with each other. Right now, we all have to do everything possible to stop the spread of the virus. This means social distancing. Waiting until someone close to you contracts the virus is not the time to realize just how serious this situation is. We all play a role, as families, as a school, and as a community. We also recognize the need to continue the educational process for our students. At the high school, we believe we have put together a model that will allow for the continuation of the education of our students over the next several weeks. Please know that the model is different at each school level because we are striving to meet the needs of all of our students.

We used last week to prepare our systems, procedures, and faculty members for the beginning of the high school Distance Learning Program. That program starts tomorrow - Thursday, April 2, at 9:30AM. I am very proud of the work our teachers and staff did in embracing the technology the way they have.

We will be using Zoom, PowerSchool, Schoology, Google Apps, and some other technology tools to promote learning for our students. Our students need to follow their teachers lead by joining them in a lesson or working to complete assignments. Attendance will be taken by each teacher. Please know that the teachers may use the technology differently. There are many ways to conduct online lessons. Each teacher will work in a manner where they feel comfortable. The most important thing is that instruction will continue in some fashion. The school district has done its' best to ensure that every student has an opportunity to learn. These efforts include distributing laptops and helping to provide internet access when needed.

The rest of this week and probably next week will be a period of transition for all students, parents, and teachers at the high school. I am sure there will be issues we will have to deal with as we move forward. Students who experience technical issues should immediately e-mail their Counselor, NOT a member of the technology staff. I ask that everyone remain patient with the onset of this program as it is a major undertaking for all the involved parties - teachers, parents, students, staff members, and administrators. Just know that I will be available to answer questions by e-mail, and phone. I will do my best to accommodate everyone.

Students should clearly understand that formal instruction of some fashion is continuing. It will be their responsibility to engage as much as possible to access their education. We realize that for those of you with students in multiple buildings, this will be even bigger challenge. At the high school, I have set aside Friday as a day where students can make up any lessons they missed because you had scheduling conflicts. This day can also be used for connecting with guidance counselors, working out problems, and working with student who have any type of special needs. We are working hard to accommodate everyone. Teachers will do their best to work with students to make sure they get any missed materials.

Assessments will also look different as students now will be able to quickly access other websites. Just know that our teachers realize that their assessment of progress will have to be different as a result of this situation.

Please understand the communication between parents and the school has never been more important. Please do not hesitate to contact me. I also ask that you listen and react accordingly to the Blackboard Connect Ed messages that are sent over the phone. If you believe that you are not receiving all of these messages, please contact me.

I have no idea when it will be deemed safe to return to school. Let's hope that day is not far away. Until then, we have an opportunity to make the best of a very challenging situation. Hopefully you agree with me that this is the best way to look at our current situation. It is an opportunity for the community to rally together and shine. We are the Palmerton Area Senior High School. We are a learning community and a family that will get through this situation together.

Here is some important information regarding scheduling, grading, and attendance.

Schedule

Block 1 and Block 2 9:30 AM-10:30 AM /11:00 AM-12:00 PM Monday and Wednesday

This is a time for all Block 1 and Block 2 classes to gather assignments or participate in a zoom session for instruction.

Block 3 and Block 4 9:30 AM-10:30 AM / 11:00 AM-12:00 PM Tuesday and Thursday

This is a time for all Block 3 and Block 4 classes to gather assignments or participate in a zoom session for instruction.

Fridays are reserved for guidance consults, specialty needs for students, and meetings with students to make up missed sessions resulting from students in multiple buildings. Students will be given adequate notice.

April 10 and April 13 – Off - However, homework can be assigned over these days.

Grading

Our main focus is to provide students with the content necessary to move on to the next level. For example, by the end of the academic year, a student has to be prepared to move from Spanish I to Spanish II.

Grades will be entered into PowerSchool as usual. If we do not return to school by the end of marking period 6 other decisions will have to be made about grades. I have talked to college

admissions officers and counselors to gather information to help us decide how to proceed from there.

Attendance

If a student does not log-in or is not participating in the online program, I have asked the teachers to reach out and find out why. We have done the best we can to ensure that every family has one computer and internet access. I am aware of some of the problems in this area. If you do not have a device or internet access and have not communicated with me yet, please do so as soon as possible.

Again, thank you for your support and cooperation.

Please be safe and well.

Sincerely,

Paula A. Husar - Principal

cc: Dr. A. Lonoconus - Interim Superintendent
Mr. Dan Heaney - Director of Curriculum / Instruction & Technology