

BOONE CENTRAL SCHOOLS

HOME OF THE CARDINALS

March 23, 2020

Dear Parents, Students and Community Members –

We are all grieving the loss of our normal school year and navigating our plan for the future has continued to be a challenge. The staff members at Boone Central and St. Michael's have taken the stance that we are ready, able and willing to do whatever is needed for the good of our schools and community, no matter how challenging.

Together we are stronger ~ Together we will find a way ~ Together we will win!

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to evolve daily and we, as well as many other state and federal leaders, have spent countless hours trying to determine the best “plan of attack” for our students and staff members. We are in need of more guidance and more support from the Department of Education, but understand they are doing their very best to provide us with direction and feedback in a timely manner. Yesterday, in a statewide conference call with school administrators, Governor Ricketts and Commissioner Blomstedt stressed the following to every school district across Nebraska:

- Nebraska is among the few states that took early measures to prevent the rapid spread of Covid-19;
- There is far more to accomplish in this societal response effort, but school closure is among the recommended strategies to address the public health concern;
- Closing schools by itself is not enough; communities, families, businesses, churches, hospitals, and individuals have to change in order to slow the spread of the virus;
- We should expect to see more extreme measures (similar to those being seen in other states);
- Schools should not return to normal operations and must prepare to operate in this alternative learning environment (without students in schools) through the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

Commissioner Blomstedt has asked every school to focus on a mission of caring for the well-being of our communities, families, staff, and neighbors. We understand the extent of the concerns and want to stress that as school district leaders we are focused on:

- The well-being of our students and families;
- Taking care of our staff members so they can address their personal needs, as well as assist with the needs of our students;
- Providing a thoughtful enrichment program, while taking into consideration the students and families with the most need including adjusted special education services, services for poverty, and English Learner families;
- Providing closure for our graduating senior class; finding a way to allow our seniors the opportunity to complete coursework and wrap-up their senior year;
- Addressing the individual needs of all students to the extent possible;
- Supporting our community and assisting with needs as they arise.

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We understand that multiple schools across the state of Nebraska have now extended their closure to April 30th or beyond; each district gaging the needs of their community to guide their decision making. We believe that it is best to be upfront about the current situation and communicate to our families that they should be making plans for this closure to extend through the end of the 2019-20 school year. Therefore, after much consideration, it is our plan to make the “new normal” our number one priority and focus on the delivery of alternative learning options through the end of the 2019-20 school year.

East Central District Health Department will be reevaluating the COVID-19 situation on April 16th. If, at that time, the health department feels we could return to a normal school day, we will assess the needs of our community and follow the appropriate guidance received at that time.

We hope that this information will help you plan and prepare for the coming weeks, but understand this reality is difficult to fully grasp. Please know that we are here to support you, and to assist our community in any way possible.

The building principals and staff members are working to get additional information out to all families. We will stay focused on meeting the needs of our students and will adjust as continued guidance and information is passed down to us from the state and federal level. Throughout the closure we will also continue to provide updates on a regular basis including details mid-April after the situation is reevaluated by the health departments.

Sincerely,

Nicole Hardwick Lisa Schumacher Erik Kravig Bill Curry Craig Theis Jon Perone Mark Hudson

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