

24 Remote Learning Update: April 24

Apr
2020



Dear District 58 Families, Staff and Community Members:

I hope this message finds you and your families safe and well. One week ago, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced that remote learning in Illinois will be extended through the end of the 2019-20 school year.

Despite this announcement, I assure you that our entire Downers Grove Grade School District 58 staff remains committed to learning and engaging with all students through remote learning, as well as continuing with our food distribution program.

Like you, we are saddened by the reality that our school community will not be able to reconvene in person this school year due to this public health crisis. So many of you have worked very hard to learn and grow in both the classroom and in extracurricular activities that last week's announcement may feel like a step back.

However, the final chapter of this school year hasn't been written yet. These past several weeks have proven our school community is resilient, capable and compassionate. I am confident our collective strength will shine through during the remainder of the school year.

Having said that, last week's announcement will result in significant and multiple scheduling changes in our school district. The District is currently sorting out the many schedule details that are on the books, including end-of-year celebrations/traditions at the elementary schools, sixth grade family nights at the middle schools, distinguished service awards, retirement celebrations, eighth grade promotion, etc. The District will shift all of these events to virtual experiences. The reason these must all be virtual experiences is because the current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Government will not permit mass gatherings of people, and we anticipate these guidelines will be extended into the summer. Please be patient as we work as a District to get information to you in the next several weeks.

We acknowledge that even with our robust remote learning plan, there will be gaps in learning for our students as they enter the next grade level. We are developing a thorough plan for the time when our students will return to on-site instruction, which will include individual student assessment to help pinpoint those gaps for each child. Additionally, as we plan for remote instruction throughout the remainder of this school year, we are working closely at each grade level to make consistent district-wide decisions around which learning standards will be emphasized. This not only ensures that our students have similar remote learning experiences, but helps us anticipate common needs as we consider revising and enhancing curriculum and instruction for the fall as a result of the suspension of in-person learning.

The District is in the process of working with our planning team to refine our remote learning plan and will provide an update to the Board of Education during the Board's 7 p.m. virtual meeting on Monday, April 27. The District is currently reviewing videoconferencing, final grades/report cards, summer school, special education and extension activities. The District will continue to update families as final decisions are made on the above mentioned topics.

requested additional information and/or access to optional extension materials. Those enrichment learning opportunities are posted under “optional resources” on each grade level remote learning plan.

I know this is not the school year that any of us imagined, but I want to thank you for your patience and understanding as we have dealt with this unprecedented situation together. This period of remote learning offers us new ways to learn and grow, and out of this pandemic, we will emerge stronger. Plans will be underway soon for the return to in-person learning next school year.

It's important we continue to work together and support our students. I would like to thank our staff for completely transforming how they are teaching. Countless hours have been spent behind the scenes making sure our students are provided with meaningful and purposeful connections and lessons. The staff of District 58 is amazing, and I am proud to work alongside each and every one of them. I would also like to thank our families for all that they have done to make remote learning successful. COVID-19 has forced our homes to become classrooms. No one asked for this, but our families are doing a great job. These are stressful times for all of us, and I am grateful that we have all been so supportive of one another. We recognize this is not ideal and look forward to that day in the future when hallways and classrooms are filled with teachers, staff and students. We are in this together, and I am confident we will get through this stronger.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kevin Russell
Superintendent of Schools