

Western Beaver County School District
Superintendent Dr. Robert Postupac

March 20, 2020

Western Beaver County School District Students, Staff, Families, and Community:

As you are all aware, Governor Wolf directed all public school buildings closed beginning Monday, March 16, 2020, for a two (2) week period. Additionally, although not directed specifically to schools, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued guidance that people should not gather in groups larger than 50 for the next eight weeks. Following the CDC guidance, the City of Pittsburgh further suggested that people should not gather in groups larger than 10. The reason for this is the exponential increase in confirmed cases of COVID-19 in just this past week. Beaver County now has 2 confirmed cases with many others waiting for results.

The Western Beaver County School District utilized the Flexible Instruction Days (FID) this week, March 17-20. **Beginning Monday, March 23, and continuing through Wednesday, April 8, the Western Beaver County School District will employ the continuity of learning model that has been put into place. Students will have Spring Break, as designated on the School Calendar, April 9 through and including April 13.** We hope to have more information for families, based on CDC recommendations and Governor Wolf's response to COVID-19, at that time, to decide if we can re-enter school or continue educating students remotely.

Life in our community, region and country has profoundly changed these last few weeks. It is highly likely this period of closure will extend beyond the Spring Break and possibly through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Western Beaver County School District is committed to focus on teaching and learning for every student every day. We spent several weeks prior to this unprecedented event preparing for a shift from traditional education to the continuity of learning model that we are implementing. This model uses a variety of strategies including, but not limited to, print and digital resources. The Western Beaver County School District was able to do this without having to pause our delivery of educational services to the community. Through the cooperation of many groups, students, families, community members, professional staff, support staff, administration and the School Board we have continued to provide a high quality program to the students. Teachers and support staff have been diligently working with the administration to design lessons in this continuity of education model that provides direct instruction of new material and checks for understanding, reinforces critical thinking, and utilizes constant communicating with our families.

Why announce to continue closure until after Spring Break now? While this is a time of uncertainty and the landscape regarding COVID-19 changes, sometimes hourly, we all have been observing the global expansion of COVID-19. Simply announcing a "two week" closure with no additional information is not what is best for a student's education. There is a great deal of uncertainty in the educational community at a time when what students need is continuity of

education and structure. The Western Beaver County School District wishes to provide some clear and concise directions for the near future. As there is a likelihood of continued spread of the COVID-19 virus, the school closure could extend even longer, but our plan to educate students remains the same.

Recent guidelines from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) indicated that our school calendar will remain intact as a result of our continued educational programming. PDE also announced on March 19, 2020, that the state standardized testing programs, PSSA, Keystone and PASA, are being eliminated for this year.

These are trying times. Closure of most businesses and the temporary or permanent loss of employment is a reality. The Western Beaver County School District, during this period of extended closure, continues to make every effort to work collaboratively with our students, families, and community to provide a sense of stability. The implementation of the Flexible Instruction Days this past week has provided an opportunity for our students, families, and staff to transition to an alternative model of instruction that will continue to be implemented during this period of closure. This has been a week of innovation, adaptation and learning for all stakeholders. It has also been a week where our families have settled in to a new “normal” during this COVID-19 pandemic. Families are learning to work together and in small spaces for long periods of time. Teachers and support staff are learning to interact in a variety of platforms while meeting the needs of all learners. It is not the quantity of work that is important; it is the quality of work that will demonstrate your comprehension of the material. Please continue to work as a Western Beaver County School District Team. Continue to come together and show the county, the region and the nation that we are

WESTERN BEAVER SCHOOL DISTRICT PROUD!