



Important Communication

August

17

Dear Cass School District 63 Parents,

This is a message I was hoping we would never have to send to our parents, children and school community. ***I am writing to let you know that we have made the decision to move to full remote instruction to start the 2020-21 school year. This means that beginning Monday, August 31, our students will be learning remotely at home on a daily basis until further notice.***

There are no words to describe the disappointment in not having your children physically present in our schools to start the school year as we had planned, and I am especially sorry for those of you who selected the blended option with the hope that your children could attend school in person. We are fully aware of how difficult this is for so many of you and that is one of many reasons that we believed that our plan was so strong. Most of us felt that what we were offering was not only best educationally, but it also gave our parents choices and provided full days you could plan on for your own needs.

Unfortunately, after spending many hours late last week and over the weekend reviewing the newly released "[Additional Guidance and FAQs](#)" from the Illinois Department of Public Health and working through different scenarios, we have concluded that there are several aspects of this guidance that are unattainable for our school district, and others so impractical that it will serve as a major impediment to the teaching and learning process. Additionally, it was rolled out at the last minute, giving us no time to even try to resolve some of these issues despite our best efforts over the course of this summer. I will be happy to answer specifically what our concerns are at a later time, but for now felt that it was most important that we get this information to you as quickly as possible so that you can plan accordingly.

So even though we are very disappointed, we are going to adjust our mindset to delivering the best remote instruction and educational experiences that we can for your children. Our teachers, administrators and staff can now truly focus on high quality remote instruction and how best to meet the individual needs of our students in this format. We are working on ways to get some of our students and families inside our schools to make sure we are all set to start the new year, and we will share more on that in the next update. We will be here for you and we will do whatever it takes to help make this successful.

Our school days and times will be the same as originally planned, but obviously instruction will be remote Monday through Friday. Our school calendar in terms of school days will be the same as well. As for how long this situation will last, at this time all we can say for certain is that we will monitor and review this and continue to keep you

updated. As soon as anything changes, our staff and parents will be the first to know.

I will be working with the leadership team and teachers to update our Return to Learn Framework with the fully remote component and share this with you in the coming days. We will also develop the FAQs as promised, but now with a focus on the remote instruction. We are working on details related to the school lunch program, assessment, special services and orientation for our students to start the year. In other words, we have a lot to do but we are all in for making this happen.

As you already know, I will continue to provide you with more details and you can expect another update within the next two to three days. We all look forward to the day things are "back to normal", but until that day comes we will be right here working to make this school year as successful as possible. There are no words to tell you how much we appreciate your patience and understanding with so many things that are beyond our control and as we work to make the best of this situation.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to the principals or to me if you have any questions. Thank you!

Mark R. Cross, Superintendent

Cass School District 63

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