



This communication supersedes all previous communication.

Previous communications are archived on the District's [COVID-19 Webpage](#).

Friday, May 8, 2020

Greetings, West York Area School District Community:

This has been a busy week in the District. At our Special Board Meeting on Wednesday night, the Directors voted to approve a virtual graduation ceremony proposal, the formation of a Board Ad Hoc Committee for the purpose of addressing issues related to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and a change to the 2019-20 calendar making May 29, 2020, the final day for students. Principal Jones, sent a [message](#) to the parents of seniors outlining the plans for the virtual graduation celebration.

At the time of this update, schools are not only finalizing students' grades and making plans to bring the 2019-2020 school-year to an end, but also prepare for the uncertainty involving the reopening schools next fall. At this point, we are planning for several potential scenarios, depending on the direction we receive from the state and local governments and our Health Department. Our goal in West York is to plan in a way that we can be responsive to many different and potentially changing scenarios, while providing our students with the best education possible. We are working through the details on what parents and students can expect next fall and will communicate those details as they become more finalized.

About Graduation

As I mentioned previously, our Board took action on Principal Jones's recommendation for a virtual High School Graduation during Wednesday's Board Meeting. The details of this plan are outlined in the message Principal Jones sent to our high school seniors, linked above. In essence, West York will have a virtual graduation ceremony for the Class of 2020 and plan a celebration for this year's seniors during Homecoming Week, next fall. The process for choosing this type of virtual commencement began by asking seniors what they wanted in a graduation ceremony. Ideas were collected from seniors using a google survey. After reviewing the survey results, the senior class president provided the School Board with various potential ideas at the April Board Meeting. Each option presented depended on the level of social distancing and the opportunity for non-essential travel. One option that looked promising consisted of a virtual ceremony that would be pre-recorded with individual students and edited in such a way that it would look like one graduation ceremony. It was the hope that the video could then be projected on an outdoor screen for students and parents, similar to a drive-in movie.

After the April Board Meeting, a committee of teachers and administrators took the students' suggestions and determined what was possible, given the information we have. After nearly a month of research and planning, the committee is confident that a virtual ceremony that students could access at home, followed by a fall celebration is the best option - not because it was the easiest, least expensive, or least amount of work (because it is none of these) but because it could be done within the current restrictions imposed upon us while providing a meaningful and unique graduation experience.

All of us would like to have a graduation ceremony where we're all together - that's not possible right now, nor do we know if it will be possible in the coming months. We just don't know what tomorrow, next week, or next month will bring. What we do know, right now, is that we can give our seniors the graduation experience outlined by Principal Jones.

Since the closure on March 13th, I have watched with great pride, the West York Community come together in ways that have been both inspiring and humbling. Our parents have assumed the role of teacher and in many cases our teachers are not only instructing their classes, but their own children - while also continuing to learn how to do all of this remotely. Our food service department has gone above and beyond to provide meals for children during the closure. Our entire community has overcome - and continues to overcome - one obstacle after another in ways that have already defined who we are, and for our students - who they can become. Our seniors have worked for 13 years and have earned the best graduation possible, and we are committed to honoring that. The graduation for the Class of 2020 will be celebrated in a unique way and unlike any other West York graduating class.

Looking ahead:

- As mentioned in last week's communication, we will be scheduling families to collect belongings during the week of June 1st. More information on what that will look like will be coming soon.
- On **Tuesday, May 12, 2020**, at 6:30 pm, the Board will hold its monthly **Work Session Meeting**. The meeting will be held virtually via a Zoom webinar platform, and it will be live-streamed on the District's [YouTube Channel](#). All are welcome to attend by registering [here](#).
- On **Tuesday, May 19, 2020**, at 6:30 pm, the Board will hold its regular Board Meeting. The meeting will be held virtually via a Zoom webinar platform, and it will be live-streamed on the District's [YouTube Channel](#). All are welcome to attend by registering [here](#).
 - Please note that the above registration links are unique to each meeting.
- As allowed by the essential services clause in Governor Wolf's Stay at Home Order, our student nutrition department continues to offer a "drive-thru" meal pick up at the Middle School from 11-Noon each weekday for anyone under the age of 18. Information about meal distribution during the school closure can be found on our [website](#) and communicated through social media. Thank you to the student nutrition team for this amazing service to the community!
- Our Class of 2020 seniors are featured on the marquee at the High School. If you happen to drive by, be sure to check it out!

Reminders:

- All District buildings and grounds (including fields and playgrounds) are closed to all but essential personnel. Please respect the barriers placed at these locations as they are there for the protection of our community. Additionally, all evening, weekend, extra-curricular, and District rentals are canceled or postponed until further notice.
- A Google online [form](#) where District families and community members may pose questions to us regarding the closure is open for submissions. Our response to the questions we received can be found on this [page](#).
- We continue to positively engage our students and community through online resources and social media during the closure.
 - [Twitter Link](#)
 - [Facebook Link](#)

- The weekly Blue & White is still published at the end of each week and delivered via email. Past issues may be found [here](#).
- Please continue to look for communication and updates from the District through Blackboard, our [website](#), and social media.

As I mentioned in a previous communication, I, like many of you, have been listening to news and updates regarding the reopening of Pennsylvania and trying to figure out what this might mean for my family, the District, and our community. Please remember that our children are no different and are processing information they read, hear, and observe in much the same way. As parents and caregivers, it's important to listen to our children and assure them that what's on their mind is important and valued. Their hopes, dreams, and worries are as real as yours and mine. While it's important to encourage children to appreciate that which we all may have once taken for granted, it's equally important to listen by encouraging open-dialogue about what they're feeling.

The [CDC](#) has a page of tips and resources for talking with children about this crisis. You may also, at any time, reach out to our [staff](#) to chat about this, or for more resources.

Sincerely,

Todd M. Davies
Superintendent