

Update – March 24, 2020

Parents & Patrons,

Well, exactly as I had anticipated, today was even better than yesterday. Not only did we initiate the delivery of academic study packets, we increased the number of lunches we delivered to our community. Yesterday, we exceeded 2,200. Today we served more than 2,600 meals to our community. Again, the community of Blackfoot should be proud of the amazing staff that we have in our schools to meet the needs of our children.

State Board Decisions

As I am sure some of you are already aware, the Idaho State Board of Education called for the “soft closure” of all Idaho schools until **April 20th**. What is a soft closure? As explained by the State Board, a soft closure calls for no students to be on school premises, however, schools are still required to provide students with meals and academic support. Basically, what we are currently doing. Our local school board already closed school until April 6th. **The State Board extended the closure until April 20th**. I anticipate we will receive continued guidance from the State Board throughout this current situation.

The State Board also waived some other requirements: ISAT testing will not take place this year, the senior project is no longer a graduation requirement for the current senior class, the current junior class will not be required to take a college entrance exam in order to graduate next year, as well as other measures which pertain to our educational professionals. I truly feel we are more prepared than most in dealing with this decision. We are already providing meals for our students. Our elementary students have already received academic support materials, with our secondary students to begin Monday, March 30th. While not ideal, I think the Blackfoot School District is ahead of the curve on this one.

Regarding the K-6th academic study packets, we will do our best to make the needed corrections so that students can receive those packets on the bus routes. If you prefer to pick the packets up at the school, please call the school and leave a voice mail with the name of your student(s) and the intentions you have regarding picking up the material. We anticipate having the remainder of the Special Education packets delivered on the bus routes tomorrow. If your child has not received their packet by the end of the day tomorrow, we would ask that you pick up the packets at the school site during the lunch “Grab n’ Go” timeframe (11:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.) beginning on Thursday.

Clarification from yesterday’s update. The packets are designed for a two-week period. We completely understand there are students who will complete these packets quicker. Therefore, on Tuesday, March 31st, our district will distribute supplemental material available through an on-line platform. The information will include where to access the material and the information needed to logon. If you desire this supplemental material, and you do not have access to the needed technology, please contact the school, and we can make hard copies

available for your student. I will speak more to the content of this material on a later update. We intend on making new packets available on Tuesday, April 7th.

Secondary (7th -12th) academic support materials will be ready beginning Monday, March 30th. Again, I will communicate more specifics regarding these materials as that date approaches. We are currently investigating ways to make our academic support materials available outside the timeframe of our lunch service. The creativity of our staff never ceases to amaze me in how we overcome some of our challenges. I look forward to sharing some of those amazing ideas.

In closing, I must once again express my gratitude to all those involved in today's "Bronco Bus Bites". Although we still had a few hiccups, things ran much smoother, even with the added pressure of academic support material to distribute. I am in total awe of the determination possessed by the staff of the Blackfoot School District in wanting to continue the connections they have established with our children. I will never question their love for our children. What I have witnessed over the past two days has literally brought me to tears, not only for the love and tenderness I have witnessed, but the sense of pride I have in the BLACKFOOT SCHOOL DISTRICT FAMILY. We are blessed to have such amazing people caring for our children. I hope we can all find a way to say thank you.

God Bless!

Brian Kress