



April 9, 2020

Good afternoon SDNB families,

We are now in our third week of distance learning, and as working parents of two children at Eisenhower, my wife and I recognize and understand how difficult, in some ways, this transition has been.

Nevertheless, as a lifelong educator and as the superintendent of the School District of New Berlin, I also recognize the importance of having our students continue to learn right now, even if it's not in the traditional sense. We want ALL students to remain on track to move on to the next grade; doing so will help prevent major disruptions to progress during the 2020-21 school year and beyond.

That said, starting after spring break, we will be refining the distance learning structure:

- Starting the week of Monday, April 20, distance learning will take place Mondays through Thursdays;
- Friday, April 24, will be a professional learning day for staff. There is no virtual school for students;
- On Fridays beginning May 1, and through the duration of the school building closures (assuming the closures last into next month):
  - Students will:
    - NOT receive new assignments;
    - Be able to connect with teachers for extra help or support;
    - Be encouraged to complete late or missing work for the week, including specials at the elementary level.
  - Teaching staff will:
    - Be available for students and parents who need extra help, support and communication;
    - Collaborate to improve distance learning opportunities for all students;
    - Plan for the following week of distance learning.

In other words, if your child has all of his / her work completed and turned in on time, and does not require additional help or communication, your child does not have "school" on Fridays.

We believe these changes will reduce the stress on our students, families and educators for however long distance learning continues. Also, please note: if your child has a disability, you may receive additional information from your child's special education teacher regarding the changes above.

As for spring break, which begins Friday and runs through, April 19, we have been asked often about why we are still holding spring break as planned. I get it -- if you had plans, they likely have been canceled. Many of us aren't going anywhere next week. Not out of town, not out of state and certainly not out of the country. We, however, committed to this schedule years ago and changing it now could cause scheduling problems for students and families. Also, and just as importantly, our teachers need and deserve a break as they gear up for the rest of the school year.



And what, exactly, will the rest of the school year look like? Unfortunately, I still don't know for sure. I want to tell you that we'll be back to normal at the end of this month. But the reality is that for weeks now we've been preparing for the possibility that our schools will not reopen this school year. In fact, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the State Superintendent of Schools, Carolyn Stanford Taylor, [recently told all districts statewide](#) to prepare for that possibility. No decision to keep schools closed for the duration of the school year has been made yet, and we continue to wait for further direction from the state DPI and governor's office. But we encourage you to start making preparations in your own home for this possibility.

Finally, we want to remind all students and families that while the "Safer at Home" order is in place, all our facilities are closed to the public. This includes our outdoor facilities such as our athletics fields and our school playgrounds. We want everyone to do their part to stop the spread of this disease - that includes stopping the potential spread of germs on our playgrounds and not gathering on our playing fields and in our parking lots. We appreciate your help with this matter.

As always, do not hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns. Your child's teachers and principals are ready to help you address needs specific to your child, and we are all here to help you through these unique times.

Stay safe and healthy,

Joe Garza  
Superintendent