

April 9, 2020



College Community Families,

On April 2, 2020, Governor Reynolds extended this school closure period through April 30 to assist in reducing the spread of COVID-19. At the same time, she introduced the requirement of schools to submit a plan for continuous learning. The purpose of this communication is to provide you with additional details related to our plan for continuous learning. All decisions related to continuous learning are intended to mitigate, to the greatest extent possible, the impact of this school closure. Since state-level conditions and recommendations change frequently, we are developing a delivery plan for continuous learning that we are able to equitably deliver if we return to school May 1 or if the closure is extended.

CCSD is proceeding with an option for continuous learning that will not require us to make up missed days in the summer months. We have the choice to adopt one of two models. One model is known as "voluntary educational enrichment opportunities". The other model is known as "required educational services". Prior to the Governor's announcement about the extension of the school closure, the College Community School District was providing academic opportunities in line with the "voluntary educational enrichment opportunities" plan. We will now gradually transition to some "required educational services" for certain grade levels as described below.

Due to the extensive and highly technical requirements, coupled with the short timeline, it was not feasible for us to offer "required services" district wide at the time of the first school closure. We had been making tentative plans, however, to move forward with some required services should the closure be extended. At the time of this communication, we have received approval from the Iowa Department of Education to implement the following continuous learning plan:

PK-8th Grade Students

Students in these grade levels will continue with the "voluntary educational enrichment opportunities" model. We will enhance the learning experiences that are being provided through this model but the expectations for students remain the same. Their participation in learning opportunities is voluntary.

9th-12th Grade Students

Students in these grades (and also younger students who are enrolled in credit-bearing 9th-12th grade courses) will gradually transition to the "required services" model starting April 21. Until that time, we will continue voluntary services. We are in the process of gathering information to assist us in ensuring all students have access to learning.

This model of learning will look and feel *very* different from traditional school. Students will not be expected to attend class online at a specific time of day. They will be expected to complete course activities and graded assignments. As we continue to work with our teachers and administrators on implementing this plan, additional communication will be provided through your child's school.

You may be wondering why our plan focuses on required services at only the 9th - 12th grade levels. While we would prefer to create a plan that requires educational services be provided for all grade levels, we lack the technological infrastructure, resources, and time to do so in this crisis situation. Given this reality, we determined where establishing required services would have the greatest positive impact and decided that our focus should be on our 9th-12th grade students.

Our decision to transition to required services for these grade levels was made with all students and families at the center. Here are a few key points that describe our rationale:

- 9th-12th grade students have a school-issued computer and have the most experience with online learning platforms. This gives us confidence that we can deliver instruction that will enhance student experience during this time while addressing concerns with equity of access to programming.
- We have compassion for our families who are facing a variety of unexpected challenges as a result of this pandemic. Asking parents of younger children to manage required learning experiences may be overly burdensome during what

is an already stressful time. Older students will be more able to effectively manage their school work independently, relying less on support from their family at home and more on the support online from their teachers.

- We are sensitive to the stress that 9th - 12th grade students and their families are experiencing as a result of this pandemic as well. We can and will apply a great deal of flexibility as we approach grading and awarding credit. We will not make any plans that jeopardize students' academic standing, progress toward graduation, or post-secondary goals.
- 9th - 12th grade students have the least amount of time remaining in our school system to recover from educational opportunities that were missed due to this school closure. Additionally, coursework at this level is highly specific and sequential.
- Offering required services for 9th - 12th graders will allow us to use available resources to support on-time graduation for all. This will limit the long-term consequences that this school closure will have on our students receiving credit.

To assist in this transition, teachers and administrators will work collaboratively on Monday, April 20, to prepare for the next phase of our continuous learning plan. Consequently, staff will not be providing voluntary learning opportunities or be immediately available to respond to students and parents on April 20. **Meal sites will continue as planned. (A reminder: meals will not be served on Friday, April 10.)**

We believe all students will be impacted by this school closure in multiple ways, both in the short- and long-term, and the education of every student at College Community is important. My hope is that, during this closure period, all families have directly experienced the care and concern that our teachers have for our students. Throughout this crisis, we will continue to prioritize the emotional wellbeing of our school community and I encourage you to reach out to us if your family is in need of more support.

In Service,

Doug Wheeler, PhD
Superintendent of Schools