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Just So You Know

What parents can do to help during school dismissal

With the 2-week “dismissal” of schools in Utah, our district is in a place it has never been before, trying to remotely teach our students, feed our students, and counsel our students. These are unprecedented tasks that will take the cooperation of “the entire village” to meet our goals.

We cannot lose sight of why our district, and every school district in Utah, is in this situation– the Coronavirus, COVID-19. The health of our community is our highest priority at this time, and stemming the spread of the virus is our challenge. The “dismissal” status of our district allows some work to be done in schools by teachers and necessary personnel. However, classes are not being held, and students should not attend their schools. Parents and students may come to a school but only for very important reasons. Gatherings of more than 10 people are prohibited, and for those who are together, they should be at least 6-feet from each other (social distancing). Parents/students who need to go to a school must report in at the school office to receive instructions relevant to their needs. Follow those instructions. Don’t come to a school if you are ill or members of your family are ill. While at school, keep children with you, and do not allow them to wander around. Under no circumstances should children be dropped off at a school just to hang out. Parents should also keep children from assembling in large groups outside of school during the dismissal.

Regarding school work, teachers are providing eLearning assignments and/or homework packets for each class and subject area. Schools are organizing their own pick-up and delivery methods for this school work, so parents and students need to check social media for instructions. Where internet and computer devices are not available, the school district will help get what is needed to complete assignments. More information about such technology is available at each school. Parents and students should treat the assigned work as though it was given by the teacher in a classroom setting. Students will have deadlines to complete the work; the work will be graded and evaluated; and the evaluations will be part of the student’s term grade. Parents should follow up with their children to make sure they have what they need to complete assignments and that they are progressing as necessary to meet the assignment due date. Instruction during dismissal will not be as thorough as it is in a classroom, but there will be some instruction via technology and there will be handouts and electronic attachments that will advance student learning.

One of the biggest concerns coming from teachers regarding school dismissal is that their students will not do the required homework. They are concerned that kids will treat this dismissal like they would a summer vacation or the holiday break with little concern for school work. Parents need to be the gatekeeper in this matter to make sure that their children understand what is going on in the world, why schools are in dismissal, and more importantly, why advancing their education is essential.

Superintendent Davis

Vision Statement:

“Education is a collaborative effort of home, community, and school. Students experience success on a daily basis and excel in performance through applying knowledge to real life situations. Schools are student-centered, guided by educators who possess excellent leadership and educational skills. Education expands beyond the classroom walls through the use of technology, and the curriculum meets the highest standards of an ever-changing world. Graduates are prepared to enter the workforce or continue their formal education at an advanced technical institution or a college or university. The Emery County School District believes that learning today provides leadership for tomorrow.”

Updated information on school “dismissal” in the Emery District

(These summary notes were previously published.)

The Emery School District “Extended” Administrative Council met Monday, March 16, to discuss plans related to the state-wide public school “dismissal” order from Governor Gary Herbert. The following decisions were made by the Council:

Communication: The communication for the district will be through Superintendent Davis who will send notifications from the Governor’s Office, the Utah State Board of Education and the Utah Department of Health to school administrators and district supervisors. Communication will be through authorized district networks, including ParentLink, websites, emails, and district and school FaceBook accounts.

Ongoing student homework: Teachers will be providing homework during the dismissal using online programs familiar to students. Online instruction will also accompany assignments in most cases. Some homework will be in the form of learning packets which will be available at schools. Expectations, deadlines, and how to submit homework will come directly from teachers to students. Homework will be graded by the teachers and scores will be applied to fourth term grades.

The Instructional Technology (IT) Department will be assisting students in getting the devices needed to do the eLearning homework, and internet services will be available from Emery Telcom for those who do not have home internet. Schools will be notifying students/parents how to check out computers and how to get the internet as a temporary free service.

Services for special needs students: Students who have IEP or 504 accommodations will continue to have accommodations during the dismissal. Students needing assistance will be able to come to the school and get help from teachers or paraprofessionals. In some cases, assistance may be provided in the child’s home. Also available will be teleconferencing between home and school. Related services, including speech/hearing, IEP Team Meetings, counseling, etc. will still be available for students and can be arranged through communication between parent and school.

Maintenance and Custodians: Custodians will be engaged in deep cleaning and sanitation at the schools as they prepare for school to resume. The maintenance department will be available to support such work in the schools but will also be advancing district capital projects.

Continuation of the Child Nutritional Program: Meals will be available starting on Tuesday, March 17, through District Food Services. Grab and Go meals will be available at each school from 10:30 am to 11:30 am each week day. The meals include a breakfast and a lunch. Pickup meals will also be available at bus stops during that time as well. A complete schedule of the Grab and Go Program will be posted this week.

Cancellation of activities and athletics: During the 2-week dismissal, all activities and athletic events in the school district are either postponed or canceled. During the dismissal, athletic teams and other organizations associated with the Utah High School Activities Association will not be allowed to practice or use district facilities. Schools will not be scheduling any new activities through the dismissal, and district employees will not be allowed to leave the district for training, workshops, conferences, or professional development related to their jobs.

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Plans for professional and classified

staff: Employees are to be paid throughout the dismissal. Principals at each school will set the working schedules and determine individual responsibilities. Teachers are responsible for the education of their students in meeting subject area core standards and designing lessons compatible with learning packets or eLearning programs. Employees will have some



flexibility built into their work assignments when approved by principals, including working from home, bringing their children with them to work, flexible hours, etc. However, teachers are still expected to be ethical and professional while in this dismissal phase of the school year.

Situations unique to the Emery District: Any concerns or challenges that surface that are unique to our district will be addressed as they become apparent.

Miscellaneous: The state-wide dismissal is for two weeks. However, it may be longer than that, so school districts should look at long-term plans... Everyone should take “social distancing” seriously. Maintain spacing of six feet or more while interacting with others... Be mindful of the most vulnerable age group, those 65+, and take extra precautions regarding their health and well-being... During the dismissal, be aware that some students will be traveling outside the school district. It is important that as they return to school administrators find out where they have been and if necessary notify the Health Department of any concerns stemming from these travels... It is the responsibility of school officials to report to the Health Department any instances of illness in the school that show symptoms of COVID-19... During the dismissal, schools will still be open, although school administrators may adjust business hours. While open, the public will be allowed to stop by our schools for short visits and appointments. However, parents should not drop kids off at school as a place to handout... While schools are in dismissal, school children should not use the time to gather socially in large groups. Parents should talk about this with their children... Districts who advance the education of their students during the dismissal will not be required to make up the days missed.

Additional information on this matter will be posted as it becomes available.

Huntington Elementary's upgrade needs

Huntington Elementary School opened in 1962.

Remodels or rebuilds:

1967- Two classroom addition

1980- Gym and west classrooms

1985- Kitchen and storage, portable building with two classrooms

Huntington Elementary, remodels or additions, have come with their own unique issues involving heating, cooling, electrical, fire alarms, water/sewer, and roofing as well as asbestos.

Initially the school had a coal boiler steam heating system and no air conditioning. Over the years the heating system has been converted to natural gas boiler steam heating, then natural gas hot water heating with individual fan coil units and evaporative coolers in classrooms and other areas.

The Heating system is getting old, and the problems with it stem from older piping and fan coil unit valves that are no longer functioning correctly, requiring repair or replacement at each unit. With the age of the system, it has become inefficient and requires a lot of preventive maintenance and replacement parts. Correcting this would require replacing the classroom units, boilers, and piping in the school which



would be a substantial cost to the district and may not have the success desired, especially in regards to improving overall efficiency.

The gym has a gas-fired roof top unit for heating and cooling. It is relatively new and works well.

Cooling system has individual evaporative coolers for classrooms and other areas of the building. They work well overall but have ongoing maintenance problems, espe-

cially as they get older.

Electrical systems for a building built in 1962 are inadequate for today's electrical and technology needs. It is expected that the demand will continue to grow. Keeping up with demand has required several creative adaptations, most of which have required surface-mounted molding for wires and cables as well as the installation of additional power panels and wiring. Most of the power in the building is at maximum capacity.

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The Fire alarm system is new. However, there were problems with equipment which necessitated an upgrade three years ago as required by the Fire Marshall. Huntington Elementary does not have fire sprinklers, and ideally sprinklers are preferred throughout the entire school. The Fire Marshall is requesting this upgrade throughout the district which is being done two or three schools at a time. In order to stay up to code at Huntington Elementary School, a new system was installed.

Water and Sewer systems, besides being older and of an older technology, have a lot of the piping that is underground below the building. It is also inaccessible, so when we have had pipe failure, we have been required to reroute the water lines or abandon sinks in certain classrooms. As a result, students need to go to the restrooms to wash up.

Roofing is an ongoing problem in every building, and Huntington Elementary School is no exception. It has Carlisle EPDM roofing over the older part of the building, and

TPO roofing that was installed in 1999 that included a 10-year warranty which has expired. We have been vigilant to keep the roofing issues addressed as they arise, but in the near future it will require a substantial investment to correct roofing issues as the building ages.

Asbestos was once used in many ways and is common in older buildings. Over the years, the district has done many abatement projects, encapsulating any that is remaining. The only way to get to the remaining asbestos is to remove the building. All areas that are remaining are maintained and inspected regularly. All documentations are available to the public upon request.

Safety, from a security standpoint at Huntington Elementary, would require a considerable upgrade at the front

entrance to allow for a buzz-in system which the district is currently installing in schools.

In the opinion of the Maintenance Department funding a new building is a needed expense and would be an effective use of district recourses.

In 2012, the Emery District funded a study of all schools and other facilities to determine needs relevant to upgrade and new construction.

Regarding Huntington Elementary, the study recommended in 2012 that the original building be immediately repaired or torn down, and that the additions built after 1979 be upgraded within five years (2017).

Since the report was published in 2012, eight years ago, the status for the school in 2020 is immediate upgrade or demolition.



USBE supports testing waivers for spring RISE and Aspire

USBE News Release: Earlier today (March 19) the Utah State Board of Education moved to suspend the requirement for the administration of statewide assessments this year. The Board also directed the superintendent to pursue all related and necessary waivers with the U.S. Department of Education and engage with legislators to exempt the Board from administering statewide assessments through legislation if necessary.

The Board values measurement of learning and growth. The transparency the data provides to the education community, and the role it plays in providing support for improved outcomes for Utah students is invaluable. However, during this extraordinary time, the health and safety, both individual and community, should

be the focus of our energies and decision making. The prospect of schools being held accountable to administer required assessments and impacted by the resulting accountability determinations is an unnecessary distraction to the challenges of maintaining a continuity of instructional service, minimizing trauma and stress, and striving to meet the needs of each student.

While no one knows how long the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will persist, it is reasonable to expect disruptions to our daily routines for at least several more weeks. This means that even when schools are able to resume normal operations, if testing were to resume, we could expect **impoverished data** as a result of the increased anxiety and uneven access to high-quality in-

structional services, technology, and home supports and structures.

Educators will undoubtedly have questions about the impact of this decision on existing accountability determinations. USBE staff will work to determine and share those answers in the coming weeks/months.

In the meantime, we encourage schools to continue to focus on providing high-quality instruction, that meets the individual needs of each student and following the directions of the state health department and other leaders in order to maintain the health and wellbeing of the community, including themselves.

State Board approves rule changes and deadline extensions

The Utah State Board of Education met via technology on March 19, to deal with a number of issues related to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the ensuing “soft closure” of Utah Public Schools. The outcome of the meeting was the suspension of year-end summative testing (see separate article) and the modifications of several Board Rules that affect the Emery School District.

A total of 10 administrative rules providing public and charter schools flexibility to deal with the profound upheaval of school closure. Following is a listing of some of the rule adjustments:

The 180-school day and 990-hour requirement

The requirement that a school calendar be approved in an open meeting

The transportation requirement that an LEA record and submit all student transportation costs, including miles and minutes

The requirement that schools administer a third benchmark reading assessment sometime between April and June 15

The board also pushed back by two months the following deadlines

- April 1 deadline to adopt a district fee schedule
- April 30 deadline requiring a school to designate an Emergency Preparedness/Emergency Response week each year before April 30
- Requirement that LEAs apply by April 1 for CTE courses for the upcoming year
- April 1 deadline to a teacher to commit to spend the teacher’s allocation of supplies and materials
- The April 1 deadline for an LEA to apply for a competency-based education program designation

In order to qualify for any waiver, the LEA must follow Health Department directives, establish school closure plans, and communicate with students and parents all relevant information stemming from changes in operations relevant to the pandemic.

Update from State Superintendent Dickson

Dear Education Colleagues:

We made it through week one of our temporary new normal and survived an earthquake! I am so proud of all of you!!!! Thank you for your extraordinary service to students and families. I have been so touched by the letters, emails, videos, and social media postings of the many ways you are teaching and reaching out to your students and families. We are all appreciative of the flexibility and initiative of our support staff and all who play a role in our schools. I had high hopes, but you have exceeded my expectations. We are part of a greater community who have all been proactively working together to protect our school communities during the growing coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. While being away from school creates additional work and stress, it is a necessary step in stopping the spread. We are all being challenged by the anxieties and uncertainties of the coming weeks and your strength is admirable.

All of you are likely wondering how long we can expect to be in the situation of "soft closure;" meaning that most adults should be out of the building and students are learning at home. The COVID-19 Task Force, Utah Dept. of Health, and Governor Herbert continue to monitor and assess the risk and will provide formal guidance soon. In the meantime, I would encourage you to plan for continuation of out-of-school learning until further notice. We will be reassessing every two weeks; so rather than waiting until Mar. 27th to determine next steps, I would encourage you to plan out an additional two weeks now. Staying ahead with lesson plans two weeks out will hopefully help you feel less anxious about a certain date of return, which at this point cannot be determined.

Speaking of assessment; we know that many of you have felt anxious about end of year assessments and accountability. Yesterday our Board of Education unanimously voted to suspend statewide assessment (RISE and ASPIRE plus) and accountability this year. We will keep you updated as we formalize the suspension by seeking waivers from applicable state and federal laws. Additionally, your assessment directors are receiving additional details from our staff and can provide you with information on other assessments.

We know it can be a challenge to provide continuous learning opportunities in the manner in which you are used to. However, your ability and willingness to adapt, including holding virtual PLCs and staff meetings, has been extraordinary. We encourage you to explore and implement what works best for your school community. For those of you who work with students with disabilities or students learning English, we commend and support the ways you are making accommodations to ensure their academic and language acquisition needs are being met. We encourage you to visit, schools.utah.gov/coronavirus, the official COVID-19 website for USBE where you can find ideas and accurate information.

I want to take a moment to remind you to all take care of yourselves, and look out for one another. We are all always so focused on supporting and giving to others, and sometimes we need the reminder to take a breath, slow down, and make sure we are staying healthy. We want you to feel safe and well, not just for yourself but your own families. While we are practicing "physical distancing" we also need to be aware that social isolation can be difficult for many. Staying in touch with your colleagues, parents, and most importantly, students, helps in feeling less isolated. Who knew that kids could engage in "virtual recess?" They need social interaction as well.

This is an unprecedented event in our lifetime. Things are changing rapidly, and they will likely change again. We will continue to inform you as quickly as we can. If you have any questions, please email coronavirus@schools.utah.gov. USBE staff will be monitoring this account in the weeks ahead, and will get you to the best resource to assist you. However, your local principals, directors, and superintendents will be your best immediate resource during this dynamic situation.

We will get through this together as one education team united!

With sincere gratitude and appreciation,

Sydnee Dickson, Ed.D.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**Emery School District
Mission Statement:**

***“The mission of the
Emery County
School District is to
provide a compre-
hensive education
that will prepare
students to take a
proactive and re-
sponsible role in an
ever-changing
world.”***

District Calendar

During the “school dismissal” period, March 16-27, district and individual school calendar events have been canceled or postponed for future scheduling.

This is in compliance with the “social distancing” rule of gathering of 10 people or fewer and separation of individuals of at least six feet. As schools resume, events will be reinstated onto district and school calendars but may still be subject to some rules with respect to the COVID-19 virus.

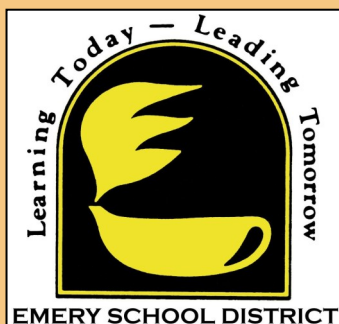


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STICKY NOTES:

NEW DISTRICT OFFICE HOURS: As of the first of the year, the Emery School District Office will be open Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 4 pm. Use of the office after regular business hours will be scheduled as needed.

District Office Personnel and Work Schedules: While the district office hours remain the same as listed above during school dismissal, hours for district office personnel will fluctuate and include some work hours from home. These changes are in line with social distancing practices as well as safety for vulnerable populations (65+, pre-existing conditions, pregnancy, etc.) The public is encouraged to take care of business with the district by phone where possible rather than coming in person to the office. Someone will be in the office during regular business hours to answer the phone.

School Lands Trust Plans/Budgets: Local School Community Councils are working on setting Lands Trust Budgets for the 2020-21 school year. The budgets need to be submitted to the superintendent by April 17. After a review of each school plan, the superintendent will submit the approved plans to the Emery Board of Education for action in the May 6, School Board Meeting at Ferron Elementary. School plans that do not meet specifications will be returned to school principals for compliance.

