



Thursday, May 14, 2020
Vol. 2, No. 17

Just So You Know

There is no joy in Mudville...

The vague hope of a spring season for Utah high school sports and activities has been put to rest by the Utah High School Activities Association. A very brief announcement last week simply stated "... the UH-SAA Board of Trustees reaffirmed the April 14, 2020, board decision to cancel all sanctioned activities for the 2020 spring season, including championships." In that announcement, the long spring rain delay became a cancellation with no plans for a make-up.

Understanding the "why" doesn't help mitigate the loss of year-end activities that mean so much to so many. The end of a season should not be dictated by a virus but rather by a final performance, a final at-bat, the last event, the awarding of championships, cheers and tears. But it is, and it goes beyond just Association-sanctioned events to include field trips, assemblies, year-end programs, yearbook signings, handshakes, fist bumps, and high fives as well as the very essence of our schools, classroom instructional time and the daily interaction of human beings.

In today's world as it is, there is a loss of profound symbolic moments that tend to gain meaning over time: Cleaning out a locker and slamming that metal door for the last time... Turning in a uniform you've called your own... Looking at an empty field of play at the end of a season... Storing costumes, scripts, stage makeup... Turning off the lights of an auditorium or concert hall... Giving away something you no longer need... Walking down a dark hall toward the what-comes-next.

On July 4, 1939, Lou Gehrig gave his farewell speech at Yankee Stadium. The speech is short, humble, and, in my view, as meaningful as anything ever written... He begins: "Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth." He ends in words that encourage us today: "So I close in saying that I may have had a rough break, but I have an awful lot to live for."

Lou Gehrig acknowledged his terminal disease as a "bad break" but didn't dwell on it or seek sympathy as his words echoed throughout Yankee Stadium. Rather, most of the short speech was presented as an appreciation to those who had supported him throughout his career in baseball and in his life, including his Mom and Dad and his wife whom he described as "a tower of strength (who has) shown more courage than you dreamed existed."

Maybe there should be joy in Mudville after all. The virus didn't infect all that we have lost, only the opportunity to participate. The Activities Association didn't eliminate the many athletic programs and activities it offers each spring. It simply, and wisely, chose not to hold such events in a time wrought with great health risk. They will return some day with the sound of a starter pistol, the umpire's "Play Ball," the dimming of the lights and opening of the curtain, and school buses filled with student/athletes in route to fulfilling their dreams. For our seniors, in many ways your experience in missing out may be more valuable than the opportunity to participate. It hasn't been fun but nonetheless invaluable.

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."

May 6 School Board summary report

The Emery District Board of Education held its monthly meeting via Webex on Wednesday, May 6, 2020 with all board members present along with Business Administrator Jared Black and Superintendent Larry Davis. Several district employees and other stakeholders logged into the meeting.

Recognition: The Board expressed its sympathies to the family of JJ Grant who recently passed away. Mr. Grant was a long-time teacher, coach, principal and district supervisor in the Emery District. He also served as the director of the Southeastern Education Service Center before retiring in 2017.

It was noted that Emery High teacher Neal Peacock was recently awarded the UEA Excellence in Teaching Award and is one of 10 educators in the state to be so honored this year.

School Dismissal and COVID 19 Update: Superintendent Davis gave the Board an update of school dismissal and soft closure in the Emery District. He reminded the Board that the state is currently in the "Orange" phase of recovery which allows school-related meetings and gatherings of 20 or fewer with proper social distancing. Most meetings in the district of that size continue to be held online. The superintendent announced that the Utah High School Activity Association has made the final decision to cancel all association-related events and competitions, including spring state championships, for the remainder of the school year. Regarding instruction and fourth term grading, all schools in the district were required to end new instruction and assignments on Friday, May 8. Students with passing grades on that date (A, B, P) would be done with course work but could improve their grade by completing unfinished work. Those students who had not earned a passing grade by the May 8 deadline and had "I" grades, now have the final two weeks of school to bring grades up to passing. In addition, schools are now working on School Catch-up Programs to help close learning gaps through the summer and into the new school year. The programs are school-designed and funded by the Federal CARES Act.

The Board was updated on how learning gaps will be assessed which will include teacher assessment of daily assignments, benchmark testing, grade-level and discipline-level Collaborative Team discussions, and diagnostic testing at the beginning of the new school year. It was noted that there will be assessment of student social/emotional status through mental health screening. The new school year may have to loop back to the previous school year with instruction and assessment. Depending on where the state is with soft closure at the beginning of the new school year, the district may have to continue home schooling, limit the number of students on campus by rotating required days at school, utilize blended learning, and other creative ways to make on-site school function.

Regarding year-end programs, the district is following a strict protocol for approval: Programs are developed on the school level, approved by the principal, receive approval from the Southeast Health Department, approved by the district supervisor, and approved by the superintendent. Several programs, including commencement programs at Emery and Green River High Schools, have gone through this process and received approval.

Public Comments on Proposed School Fee Schedule: The second of two public hearings on this matter was held at the May 6, meeting. Business Manager Black summarized the policies related to school fees and invited those following the meeting to offer input or ask questions. Mr. Black had meet with administrators and secondary coaches and advisors in crafting the policy. While there is little impact to elementary schools, the secondary schools, especially the two high schools, will have specific maximum fees allowed for each sport/activity. Also, fees and fines for other programs are included in the policy. All fees are subject to fee waiver. After limited input, the Board approved Policy JQ-E- School Fee Schedules. The district will now go through a similar process with respect to school fundraisers. *(Continued on the next page)*

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Report on Enrollment Numbers and Staffing: Superintendent Davis advised the Board that the Administrative Team has been working on staffing for 2020-21 using a budget similar to that of the 2019-2020 school year. That amounts to a significant decrease in the anticipated budget for the next school year coming out of the 2020 Legislative Session. However, the current economic crisis has necessitated a rollback of the 6 percent increase in the WPU as well as other education allocations. The Board further discussed staffing for 2020-21 in closed session, and on Thursday, May 7, the district office announced that an additional FTE (Full-Time Educator) will be added at both Book Cliff Elementary and San Rafael Middle School. Also, the district will continue to support the half-day FTE currently in place at Cleveland Elementary.

Personnel Names for Approval: The Board approved the following for employment for the 2020-21 school year- Kasey Edgehouse, Emery High boys' golf coach; Megan Hatt, Green River High School ELA teacher; Devan Meadows, Green River High School baseball coach; Kira Hughes, Green River High cheer adviser; Becca Sitterud, Emery High assistant cheer adviser; Jeff Cisneros, Emery High boys' basketball coach, and assistant Emery High boys' basketball coaches Todd Huntington, Chase Julian, and Dakota Cisneros.

The Board also approved the hiring of Jackie Allred as the new district business manager, replacing Jared Black who will become superintendent July 1. Mrs. Allred is currently in the Emery Business Department with a primary responsibility of district payroll.

Also regarding employment in the district, the Board has asked Superintendent Davis to create protocol for announcing and publicizing new personnel. That process will be added to the district's employment protocol and will generally apply to all teacher employment, full-time employment, and "high profile" employment.

2020-21 School Land Trust Plans: The Board approved all 10 School Land Trust Plans for the 2020-21 school year. Each plan sets academic achievement goals and details how use of Lands Trust Plan funding will be allocated in support of these goals. The plans will now go to the Utah State Board of Education for review. It is expected that the funds will be released to the district schools next fall. In addition to approving next year's plans, the Board also approved an amendment to the 2019-20 Cleveland Elementary School plan.

Proposal for Elementary PLC Time: In the April Board meeting, Board members received a detailed proposal from elementary principals and Elementary Supervisor JR Jones regarding imbedded weekly PLC time for grade-level teachers to meet with Collaborative Teams and for schools to conduct vertical teaming and professional development. Currently, PLC time is calendared at midterm and at the end of each term. However, as the PLC program has evolved, elementary teachers and administrators have realized that more time is needed to maximize student learning. The elementary team provided plans for weekly 2-hr. meetings, whether for collaborative team meetings, or meetings/training at individual schools. Also, the team has been working with the Emery Transportation Department to create an early-out bussing schedule. After discussion, the Board voted to approve the proposal as a 1-year pilot program with board review at the end of the 2020-21 school year. The district-wide elementary early out will be held on Wednesdays starting in the fall.

Interlocal Agreement for Castle Solar: Over the last few months, members of the Board have been discussing the Castle Solar Project and an associated Interlocal Agreement. The Board received an update on the project in the May 6, meeting and learned that concerns related to the project had been resolved and the plan was in accordance with district expectations with some minor changes to the agreement document. The Board then voted in favor of the agreement.

Board Participation in Commencements: It was announced in the meeting that Board Members Tracey Johnson, Jessy Johansen, and Kenzi Guymon will attend the May 21, Emery High Commencement while Board Members Royd Hatt and Marie Johnson will attend the May 21, Green River High School Commencement.

School Land Trust goals listed for new school year

The Emery School Board approved Schools Lands Trust Plans for the 2020-21 school year at its meeting held on May 6, 2020. Following is a list of each school's goals as outlined in their plan. Lands Trust funding will go toward achieving school goals.

Book Cliff Elementary: 1) Students will show a 3 percent growth in language arts by the end of the 2020-21 school year. 2) Book Cliff Elementary will increase student growth in math by 3 percent from the previous year. 3) Book Cliff Elementary will increase growth in science by 3 percent based on the previous year's projects and assessments.

Castle Dale Elementary: 1) The goal is to focus on using student data to both inform and drive instruction especially in regard to the Utah State Core Standards. Using information and data gathered from both formative and summative assessments including, but not limited to Acadience, school, district, and state assessments, Castle Dale Elementary teachers will be better able to make instructional decisions and changes within their classrooms on an ongoing basis. By having this as our focus, our goal is to increase the number of students who perform at a proficient level and to maintain a high level of performance where a high level of performance has been established. Where a high level of performance does not exist we want to see an increase in the number of students coring at a proficient level in English Language Arts and mathematics as compared to student performance the previous year. As part of verification that we are meeting our goal a variety of data sources may be used, including but not limited to, end of level state test results along with other district and school diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments. Benchmark test results may also be used to show growth and progress.

Canyon View Middle: 1) By having our two tutor/tracker aides return to our school, we will reduce our number of at-risk student by 50 percent by the end of the 2020-21 school year. 2) By using a targeted reading intervention program, we will have more than 80 percent of our students on or above grade level in reading by the end of the 2020-21 school year. 3) On Wednesdays after school, we will provide a homework class for students with an average of 10 students in attendance each week. 4) Using Aleks Math as a supplement to math instruction, 60 percent of our students will reach 60 per proficiency in their grade level Aleks topics by the end of the school year. 5) By implementing educational field trips and other educational experiences fo-

cused on social-emotional learning and future opportunities, we will have each student create and work toward an individual vision plan by the end of the school year. 6) By increasing staff professional development in the PLC Model and computer science, we will improve outcomes for students by having 100 percent participation in PLC Collaborative Teams during the 2020-21 school year.

Cleveland Elementary: 1) Teachers in grades four and five will improve science spring summative assessment scores. Eighty percent of students in grade kindergarten through fifth grade will improve on school level benchmark tests. 2) Teachers in grades third through five will improve math spring summative assessment scores. Eighty percent of students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade will improve on school level benchmark tests. 3) Teachers in grades third through five will improve language arts spring summative assessment scores. Eighty percent of students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade will improve on benchmark tests, including Acadience reading, reading level benchmark data, and other measurements like Lexia. 4) Teachers in grade five will improve writing spring summative assessment scores. Teachers in grades kindergarten through fifth grade will increase emphasis on writing instruction and assessment in kindergarten through grade five.

Cottonwood Elementary: 1) Cottonwood Elementary School will continue to focus on using data to drive and inform our instruction in regards to the Utah State Core Standards, thus increasing the number of students that are proficient. By using the data from formative and summative assessments, teachers will be better equipped to make decisions regarding ongoing instruction in their classrooms. We will use our spring 2021 RISE Test results in conjunction with our School City data and teacher's Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) to verify our completion of this goal. 2) Cottonwood Elementary will strive to ensure the number of students that are proficient in reading comprehension and vocabulary skills is maintained, and that we show a 5 percent increase in the number of students that show growth in reading comprehension and vocabulary skills, particularly nonfiction reading skills and strategies. This will be accomplished through the use of journals that will help students track and show thinking, through the use of multiple paraprofessionals and art/music and health

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intensive reading and math instruction/remediation for all students, and by utilizing the online software programs that will be purchased. This goal is an on-going goal for our school. We will check our progress at the end of the 2020-21 school year by the use of Acadience Reading Assessments, 2021 RISE spring tests, School City data, and teachers' Student Learning Objectives which will allow us to determine the next steps in our plan when writing the 2021-22 school year goals.

Emery High School: 1) We want to continue to add technology to our building for our students and teachers to use. Teachers are encouraged to use Canvas and other technology to deliver content to students. We want our students to have increased access to math, writing, and reading software programs. We also use technology in CTE classes to prepare students for post high school. By using technology, we expect proficiency levels to go up from 2020. 2) We want to continue to support our Concurrent Enrollment Programs, CTE offerings, STEM Ed classes, and pathways. Our goal is to provide classes that will keep seniors enrolled as full-time students. By offering these classes, we want to see our graduation rate increase by 1 percent. 3) Our administrative team is constantly evaluating the effectiveness of these programs. Counselors are doing action research projects to check progress. We also look at the skills test completer and pathway completer rates to help in our assessment and determination of how successful these programs are.

Ferron Elementary: 1) Our goal is to have 70 percent of Ferron Elementary K-5 students reading on grade level and performing math skills on grade level. Also that 70 percent of the students, regardless of current performance levels, will achieve a minimum of one year's academic growth in language arts and math as measured by standardized assessments.

Green River High School: 1) Green River High School will purchase replacement Chromebooks yearly for language arts, social studies, and science in the effort to enhance blended learning in the classroom. This is an ongoing goal. 2) Green River High School will provide stipends for teachers within our district who will deliver their class via IVC. This endeavor between schools allows more class opportunities for the students at GRHS. This is an ongoing goal for our school and district. 3) Green River High School teachers will be given the opportunity to develop their skills and understanding of professional learning communities, literacy, and social/emotional learning. 4) Green River High School will incorporate the 7 Mindsets program to help students with self-determination and self-awareness; improved behav-

ior, scores and graduation rates; greater confidence and engagement. 5) Green River High School will purchase Smart TVs for student and teacher presentation in the effort to enhance blended learning in the classroom. This is an ongoing goal. 6) In order to meet our literacy goals, Green River High School will provide literacy intervention to all students throughout the 2020-21 school year.

Huntington Elementary: 1) Use funds to support district technology software requirements, purchase school software that we have evaluated and want to continue to use, and add new programs that will support math, reading, and science. Software includes: Keyboarding Online, Reading Eggs, Math Seeds, Learning Ally, Accelerated Reading, Spelling City, and Reflex. 2) Maintain current Title I aides for reading and math interventions. 3) Provide opportunities for students to continue to use technology to enhance learning in their classroom. These opportunities come by providing new Smart TVs to four teachers. It will provide interactive lessons and multiple ways to integrate different learning styles. 4) Provide Professional Learning Community training for teachers to continue the district's Leadership of PLC to improve instruction and student learning. Also, we want to provide professional development opportunities to teachers, so funds will be available to help with any professional development they would like to attend that are curriculum-related. 5) Bring in an art and music specialist for three hours a day four days a week for 139 days.

San Rafael Middle School: 1) Fund a part-time aide to help track, tutor and monitor students who struggle in academics who do not have IEPs. Provide a weekly after school homework class intervention for students. Provide funding for tutoring necessary for students who have 504 Plans or are on home-bound status. Provide funds for after-school activities and opportunities for students. 2) Increase and support the use of technology and Blended Learning in classes to assist student learning. The purchase and use of both software and hardware in support of technology in the classroom and the use of it to increase learning will be done throughout the year. Online software will be purchased in math and language arts to assist learning and teaching. Other proven software use will be encouraged as well. 3) In order to reduce class sizes and provide a better learning experience for students and more class opportunities, monies will be used to purchase prep periods for up to two teachers. Subject areas and teachers will be determined as the schedule for the upcoming year is developed. This will go into effect at the beginning of the year and continue throughout. 4) Increase professional development for staff by funding opportunities. These opportunities may include Solution Tree/PLC Conference, among others.

Council reviews plans for end-of-year closure

For the first time since Utah public schools went into soft closure, the Emery District Administrative Council met via WebEx for its regularly scheduled monthly meeting held on May 12, 2020. The meeting included school administrators and district supervisors.

The council reviewed new information on soft closure released by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Syd Dickson, including "Suggested CARES Act Uses" and planning for the end of the school year.

The CARES funding comes to public schools from federal legislation in support of mitigating consequences stemming from school closure due to the pandemic. The Emery School district is allocating funding to each school to be used according to individual school plans for getting students caught up who have fallen behind.

Regarding the end of the school year, catch-up plans, and preparing for the start of the new school year, emphasis was placed on creating an equitable learning environment for all students and assuring that all students have equal opportunity to succeed academically and socially.

Now that the May 8, deadline has passed ending any new assignments, teachers will be working with those students with incomplete grades and beginning the process of assessing individual learning gaps. Through school

catch-up plans and Collaborative Team strategies teachers will continue to work with students through the summer and even into the new school year.

What the next school year will look like is unknown and will depend on the pandemic and health officials' directives. However, Superintendent Dickson is advising districts to prepare for continued social distancing, use of masks for adults and possibly students, protocols for bussing, continued modification to preparation and delivery of food, smaller numbers of students allowed in classrooms, adjustments to programs and events involving large numbers of people, protocols for dealing with symptomatic and asymptomatic students and adults, updated medical kits, and frequent sanitizing.

In reports from principals, schools are operating as efficiently as possible under the circumstances but the longer the pandemic restrictions continue, the greater the stress for those involved.

Most schools are planning summer catch-up programs but are cautious about adding too much too soon to students, parents, and teachers. Catch-up plans include a social/emotional component which will be designed to deal with the psychological impacts going forward.

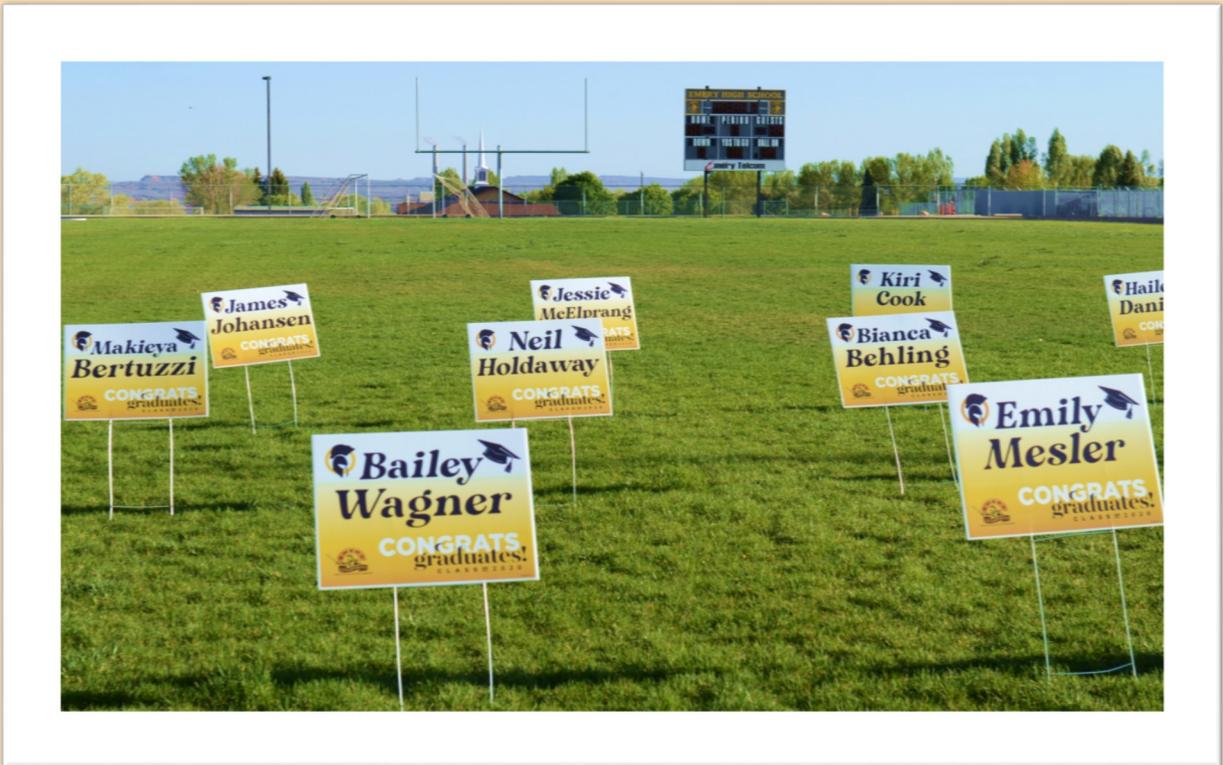
Superintendent Larry Davis asked the Administrative Council

members to start having discussion about starting a new school year under pandemic conditions. "We can't wait for school to start in August to determine how to deal with such limitations. We need to plan now in a worst-case -scenario way," he said. "Hopefully, we won't need such a plan, but right now we can't be without one."

Also discussed as part of the end of the school year was holding Collaborative Team Meetings as previously scheduled. Normally, the last day of school, May 22, is a non-school day for students and a Professional Learning Community Day (PLC) for teachers.

In telling principals that Collaborative Team Meetings need to be held at the conclusion of the school year, Superintendent Davis said that they can be held electronically or in person if social distancing standards are followed. Also, such meetings do not need to be held on May 22, but could be held prior to that day or shortly after.

According to the superintendent, collaborative meetings under the circumstances are valuable for teachers to discuss essential standards, benchmark assessments, learning gaps, and strategies to close those gaps through catch-up programs both in the summer and at the start of the new school year.



HONORING SENIORS: The pandemic has taken away a lot of end-of-year experiences for our students, especially seniors. However, efforts to recognize the 2020 graduates are taking place at Green River High School and Emery High School as well as the communities they serve. Above, signs honoring Emery High graduates are placed on the football field under the Friday night lights.

District miscellaneous:

Technology Services: The District Technology Department has advised principals of professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators. Specific training needs should be routed through Supervisor Doug Johnson who will set up the training as needed for individual schools or collective schools. Also, IT has requested technology purchase orders from each school for district bundling as a means of minimizing costs.

Capital Outlay Projects: Kerry Lake, maintenance supervisors, has advised administrators that the district is experiencing delays in contracted capital outlay projects due to the pandemic. He said many contractors have shut down operations in support of social distancing requirements. It is unknown when work will resume. The district maintenance department is doing what it can to advance projects.

Legislative Summary Reports: The District Administrative Team updated the Administrative Council on May 12, on new legislation coming out of the 2020 session. The district staff will be working on updating district policy and reviewing grant applications stemming from the legislative action.

Administrative Transition: Business Administrator Jared Black reported in Administrative Council Meeting that he will be working with his replacement, Jackie Allred, in June as she transitions into her new position. Also, Mr. Black indicated that he will also be working with retiring superintendent Larry Davis, also in June, as he transitions into that position. Mr. Black will become the new superintendent July 1.

Emery School District
Mission Statement:

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

District Calendar

Thursday, May 14: Announcement of district award winners

Monday, May 18: Administrative Team Meeting, 9 am

Thursday, May 21: SESC Board of Directors Meeting... Emery High Commencement, 6 pm... Green River High School Commencement, 8 pm...

Friday, May 22: Last day of school... PLC Day for Teachers

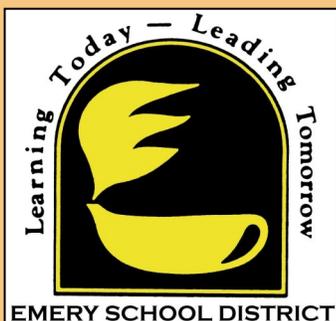


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STICKY NOTES:



District Office Personnel and Work

Schedules: During school soft closure, hours for district office personnel will fluctuate and include some work hours from home. Regular office hours will be from 10 am to 2 pm Monday through Friday. 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.

District Office Closure for Sanitation and Deep Cleaning:

The district office will be closed for cleaning beginning on Tuesday, May 26 and continuing through Monday, June 1. Office calls will be answered remotely and directed to the appropriate district employee. The public is encouraged to use email correspondence for matters that are not time-sensitive. The cleaning is necessary as part of the state's COVID-19 prevention program.