



## UNITED PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7

**CHRISTOPHER BACHMEIER, SUPERINTENDENT**

**Burlington-Des Lacs Elementary**  
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Hello,

I am hoping that during this crazy time in our world that you all had a very enjoyable Easter celebration. As I have learned through this entire pandemic, the value of time with family is something that is precious and not to be taken for granted.

We held our school board meeting on Wednesday evening of this week and discussed how we as a school district are planning to move through these ever-changing times. I will first start by saying that I have seen success in our students and staff in this distance learning modality that we have embraced and implemented for our students. It is hard to believe that we are a month into this process and routines have been found, expectations have been met, and real learning has taken place. I know that distance learning is not the best way for students to learn and I cannot wait until the day I get to see our students fill the hallways, classrooms, and gymnasiums in our schools. After discussing those successes with our school board, I did recommend that we finish our school year out in this online learning modality. Much like when we have a winter storm I worry about student and staff safety in relation to education in making the decision to hold classes. I know this is a hard topic for all of us in thinking that our students are not going to be able to have closure with their school years and especially for our graduating seniors. After much discussion and listening to concerns of others, I believe it would be best if I modify my viewpoints and tell you what I believe will be our course of action over the next six weeks of our school year. We will be having a special school board meeting to discuss these topics more on May 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.

### Elementary Classes

The elementary school will not be discussed at the meeting because we will finish out the school year in an online learning modality for our students in grades K-6. The truth is that if we can get together with students it will not be until early to middle May. For instance, if we can come back on May 11<sup>th</sup> that only leaves us with nine days of school. Getting in routines for our younger students takes time, and I feel our students and teachers will lose more valuable education than what they would attain by coming back together. I know this is difficult for the students and they miss their friends, however I believe strongly that this is the best way to educate them for the time being.

### High School Classes

Looking at our high school students and finishing out the school year, we will plan to be in this modality until Governor Burgum allows us to come back together. I feel high school is somewhat different than that of elementary as our schedule can be more flexible and transportation is not as big of an issue. For instance, if we are allowed to return on May 11<sup>th</sup>, we would be able to have a modified schedule to keep

students separated in a safe educational setting. We would be finishing out our year with an abbreviated and modified schedule for our students to complete their final tests within our building. It is important for our seniors to have the closure on their high school career that they so deserve before graduation. By waiting for Governor Burgum to give us further guidance, we believe we are doing everything in our power to provide our older students this possibility. If he decides before our meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup> that we are to finish in our current modality, we will plan to have our final tests the week of May 18<sup>th</sup> through our distance learning platform.

### Prom

We are going to postpone our annual spring prom celebration to June. The tradition of prom is one of great importance to our students, families, and school so we are trying to make it happen for our students. The date in June has yet to be determined as we will make that decision on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

### Extra Curriculars

The North Dakota High School Activity Association has currently suspended all activities indefinitely in accordance with the declaration of Governor Burgum. They will have their board of directors meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup>. We will make our decision in conjunction with their guidelines once that information is released.

### Graduation

Graduation is one of the most hallowed traditions in a student's educational career. We are taking this tradition very seriously and are doing everything in our power to have it in the manner it deserves. We are keeping our graduation date on May 24<sup>th</sup>, but please realize that how we perform the ceremony and the number of attendees may be different than that of past years. This topic will be at the forefront of our school board meeting and I am hoping that we will have some guidance on how large of groups may gather at this time. If we find that the restrictions are too stringent to hold graduation, we will postpone it to another date. I know this causes great anxiety for people and we will do everything in our power to have graduation before the end of June. I ask that everyone be understanding that this decision is not one that is taken lightly, and please know that it is important for us to give our graduating seniors the best possible experience for their high school graduation.

### Closing

I have not lost hope through this pandemic. This letter is merely the best way to inform everyone where we stand as a school district. I know not all the information or decisions are popular, so I just ask that you please understand that we are making these decisions with the health, safety, and educational needs of our students in mind during these trying times.

Take Care,

Christopher Bachmeier United #7  
Superintendent of Schools