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April 9, 2020

Tamaqua Area SD Families:

This morning, Pennsylvania's Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera made the decision to close all schools for the remainder of the school year. Moments later, Governor Wolf gave the same order. This was done in conjunction with the Department of Health based on the most recent information related to COVID-19.

While this does provide some knowledge, it still leaves many questions that are not ready to be answered. I will attempt to clarify some information for you as it stands today. We have already experienced instances where we were told one thing only to have it change the next. The entire community has been adapting regularly for nearly a month. We will most likely continue that over the final weeks of our school year.

A few items to update:

1. Closure- The closure is for the remainder of the school year according to each district's school calendar. For us, that currently means our last day of school is May 29, 2020.
2. Meals- At this time we will continue to provide meals for pickup each Monday and Thursday, behind the senior high school.
3. Educational Program- On Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, our teachers will begin planned instruction for all students. This means that the material being presented will be new material that the students have not been taught before. I can't emphasize to you enough how critical it is for our students to participate in the online learning platform provided by our dedicated faculty and staff. If you have a child in the elementary or middle school, the skills being taught are needed for them to be successful next year. If they don't learn the information now, they could fall behind next year making learning difficult. If you are a high school student, failure to communicate and actively participate each day could negatively affect your ability to reach future goals. As just one example, if a student misses the information from the final quarter of Algebra 1, how can he or she expect to be ready for the beginning of Algebra 2 next year? Active, sincere participation in your education is required for your success.

4. Communication- Please reach out to teachers or administrators to help you get connected or if you have questions and need support. We are committed to helping you and your child. We just need to know how we can help.
5. Events & Activities- What is happening with graduation? Are we having a prom? Can we still perform our musical? Most of the questions come from our senior high school students and families. The impact of this pandemic and school closure on the Class of 2020 specifically is heartbreaking. Please know that we continue to be committed to providing as many opportunities for students as possible. We have been assessing our ability to have ceremonies virtually, in parking lots, with limited attendance and/or multiple other possibilities. If health-related guidelines open and we are able to have these events in late May, we will. If guidelines change in June and students want these experiences, we will support them. It doesn't seem as though you have given up. Neither have we.
6. Providing & Distributing Devices- Members of administration have been working for weeks to get students what they need. We have called, emailed and visited your homes. Please reach out at 570-668-2570, ext 1050 for help. Hurry! New material begins next week.
7. Parental Involvement- Thank you for working with our teachers to provide the best education possible for your child. If they are having any stress related or mental health concerns, contact your child's guidance counselor right away. Please continue to ensure they login everyday and complete assignments everyday. Much like the regular school year, they always have work to do. Continue to follow social distancing guidelines.

We may not be in school, but we are all still part of our school. I often talk about our school community and how we must work as a team. It has been my pleasure to work with students and families throughout our school district. Stay positive as we work through this together. As always please reach out to me at any time at [rkinder@tamaqua.k12.pa.us](mailto:rkinder@tamaqua.k12.pa.us). Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



Raymond J. Kinder  
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