

5/3/2020

Dear Susquenita Parents/Guardians and Students,

I hope you have all been doing as well as possible under the current circumstances. I'm sure that all of this is beginning to wear a bit thin. I often feel like the movie Groundhog Day has turned into a real-life situation. By the grace of God, we will start to see some positive changes sooner than later.

Like many of you, I waited anxiously to see if the Governor was going to announce a change of status for Perry County. At least that would be some progress. Nevertheless, he did not. We remain a red county and need to wait a bit longer for restrictions to slowly be lifted. For those who haven't seen the Governor's color chart used to identify stages in lifting restrictions, I've attached the chart at the end of this communication for your review.

I'm sure that many of you have questions about the direction certain things will take in the months ahead. Let me share what I know for now. As such, I will only share what I know as opposed to making any assumptions.

Graduation: As stated in my last communication, PDE has put out guidance that indicates schools may hold virtual high school graduation and other traditional end of school year ceremonies during the COVID-19 closure. The safety and security of all students and school community are a priority for the commonwealth and all chief school administrators. Currently, restrictions on gatherings larger than ten people and aggressive social distancing recommendations are in place across the commonwealth. When closure restrictions are lifted by the Governor, LEAs may consider the appropriateness of holding such gatherings.

Given the guidance provided from PDE, Susquenita is finalizing plans related to graduation. Accordingly, what I can share for now is that graduation will occur on June 4<sup>th</sup> as scheduled. Though there are more details still to be ironed out, I can also share that we are planning a Drive-In Theater Format Graduation to be held on the Susquenita campus followed by a celebratory parade. Everything we are able to arrange will be in keeping with appropriate social distancing guidelines. Plans are currently being arranged for:

- an outdoor stage
- sound system (outdoor speakers and car radio connection)
- speeches to be delivered as usual from the faculty, salutatorian and valedictorian
- students to receive diplomas on stage
- photographer
- video streaming of event if possible

Specific details surrounding graduation will be forthcoming. Hopefully this has helped to provide some guidance for the time being. I also want to take this opportunity to thank those of you who contacted Mr. Funk and me with your ideas and suggestions as requested in my last communication.

Athletics: No new guidance has been provided since my last communication. While PIAA remains hopeful that summer activities will be able to commence July 1, it is still too early to reach any decisions or offer guidance at this time in providing any further guidance to the membership. PIAA will continue to monitor any additional information provided by the Governor's Office, Department of Health or Department of Education as it relates to interscholastic athletics.

Staff and Student Belongings: The District recognizes that staff and students will eventually need to pick up personal belongings left behind as a result of school closures in mid-March. Accordingly, we will make arrangements for this to occur as soon as we can. Obviously, the District would like to move forward with summer cleaning and scheduled projects. We will be in touch as soon as plans to address this are ironed out.

Parent and Student Technology Updates: The District Administration and Board of School Directors have made the decision to purchase additional iPads in order to make sure every student, K-12, will have their own iPad this Fall. iPads for K-6 students would not go home with the students like they do in grades 7-12 unless we are forced to teach remotely for an extended period of time as is currently the case. K-6 iPads will be utilized to enhance instruction and enrich student learning opportunities while maintaining the important teacher/student connection we feel is so valuable in the early grades. In other words, iPads will play a lesser role in grades K-6 than in grades 7-12.

With this in mind, our teachers K-6 have already been scheduled for professional development centered around the use of iPads and resources. The District is also in the process of revising technology curriculum K-6 in order to make sure students are provided with early basic iPad instruction.

We continue to post technology related learning opportunities on our website for our parents. Parent resources can be found at <https://www.susq.k12.pa.us/Page/2179>.

iPad specific resources

- [iPad User Guide](#)
- [iPad Support](#)

Concurrently, the District is starting to move K-12 with the student learning platform CANVAS. Currently, CANVAS is used primarily in middle and high school. Seesaw, (a student driven digital portfolios and simple parent communication platform) has been primarily used in the lower grades. Accordingly, our teachers K-6 are also receiving professional development on CANVAS. The following resources are available to parents who may want to learn more about CANVAS themselves. Please know that one of the biggest reasons for this shift is to be better prepared to teach remotely if we find ourselves in a similar situation to what we are experiencing now. The District has a responsibility to be as prepared as possible going forward.

Links to CANVAS support can be found at <https://www.susq.k12.pa.us/Page/2179>.

Lastly, I realize that there have been mixed feelings from staff and parents alike regarding the use of face to face learning opportunities such as could be obtained via Zoom or a similar platform. Susquenita has chosen not to allow this until we fully explore our options regarding this while establishing proper guidelines for use by our staff and families. We want to feel comfortable that we've done our due diligence in making a final decision around this subject. Accordingly, The Administration, along with Susquenita Education Association representatives is planning for this with the following in mind:

- We want to use the next several weeks to flush out this subject in time for Fall and the unfortunate event that we would find ourselves in a similar situation to what we are in currently.
- We want to see if in fact ZOOM or a similar platform would be best for us to use, and under what circumstances and settings such a platform would be utilized.
- We want to identify fully any "housekeeping" needs that may need to be addressed related to policy, permissions, licenses, costs, ETC.
- We want to develop guidelines for staff, parents and students.
- We want to prepare for any related professional development that may be needed.

In conclusion, it is the desire of Administration and Union Leadership to hold off on doing anything with Zoom or similar platform until this Fall at the earliest.

Teacher Appreciation Week: May 4th-8th

Teacher Appreciation Day: May 5<sup>th</sup>

Please join me in recognizing our teachers. Truth is, none of us would be who we are or where we are today if it were not for the teachers who taught us and shaped the trajectory of our lives. Teachers equip us with essential knowledge and skills, encourage us to persevere through challenges big and small, and push us to dream big about where our lives could take us. It's what they do!

<b>COVID-19 REOPENING PHASES</b>		
	<b>WORK &amp; CONGREGATE SETTINGS</b>	<b>SOCIAL SETTINGS</b>
<b>RED PHASE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LIFE-SUSTAINING BUSINESSES ONLY</li> <li>• RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE FOR PRISON + CONGREGATE CARE</li> <li>• SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION</li> <li>• MOST CHILD CARE CLOSED</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STAY AT HOME ORDERED</li> <li>• LARGE GATHERINGS PROHIBITED</li> <li>• RESTAURANTS/BARS LIMITED TO CARRY-OUT + DELIVERY</li> <li>• ONLY TRAVEL FOR LIFE-SUSTAINING PURPOSES</li> </ul>
<b>YELLOW PHASE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TELEWORK MUST CONTINUE WHERE FEASIBLE</li> <li>• BUSINESSES WITH IN-PERSON OPERATIONS MUST FOLLOW SAFETY ORDERS</li> <li>• CHILD CARE OPEN WITH WORKER + BUILDING SAFETY ORDERS</li> <li>• RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE FOR PRISON + CONGREGATE CARE</li> <li>• SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STAY AT HOME RESTRICTIONS LIFTED IN FAVOR OF AGGRESSIVE MITIGATION</li> <li>• LARGE GATHERINGS PROHIBITED</li> <li>• IN-PERSON RETAIL ALLOWED CURBSIDE/DELIVERY PREFERRED</li> <li>• INDOOR RECREATION, HEALTH AND WELLNESS FACILITIES (SUCH AS GYMS, SPAS), AND ALL ENTERTAINMENT (SUCH AS CASINOS, THEATERS) REMAIN CLOSED</li> <li>• RESTAURANTS/BARS LIMITED TO CARRY-OUT + DELIVERY</li> </ul>
<b>GREEN PHASE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ALL BUSINESSES MUST FOLLOW CDC AND PA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH GUIDELINES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AGGRESSIVE MITIGATION ORDERS LIFTED</li> <li>• INDIVIDUALS MUST FOLLOW CDC AND PA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH GUIDELINES</li> </ul>

Please know that we will continue to keep communications open and share any new developments as they unfold. Please know that Pennsylvania Superintendents have received no guidance from either the state or PDE with regard to the start of the 2020-2021 school year. I hear and read the same as you do as far as what others may “think could happen” or may be planning for based on the direction they have received. I ask that you trust the fact that I will communicate more on this subject as information and direction becomes available. Again, I only want to share what I know as opposed to making any assumptions.

Until then, please keep communications open with your teachers and building principals as needed. As always, I encourage students to remain as engaged as possible with weekly assignments being provided through our continuity of education plan.

Stay Safe and God Bless!

Sincerely,



Kent R. Smith  
Superintendent of Schools