



# Philomath Public Schools

Benton County School District 17J, 1620 Applegate Street, Philomath OR 97370 (541) 929-3169

April 8, 2020

Dear Philomath School District Families, Students, and Community Members:

With the health and safety of our students, staff, and communities as her primary focus, Governor Brown and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) announced that our schools will be closed to students for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year. We know this announcement is likely to be a great disappointment for our students and means more disruptions and continued challenges for families. We know that closing schools was a difficult decision, but this action is intended to keep us all as safe and healthy as we can be.

This is an especially difficult decision for our seniors as they prepare to enter their post-secondary school lives. We are committed to finding creative ways to honor you and your achievements. We will be in contact with you and your family soon for your input. Our seniors will be receiving a call from either Mr. Bussard, Mr. Johnson, or Ms. St. Clair in the next couple of days to discuss the impact of the Governor's order on their high school graduation and to poll them on potential graduation celebration models.

Today's announcement also included important information for our high school seniors. ODE's **Graduation Pathways 2020** (<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/Pages/Distance-Learning-for-All.aspx>) maintains the 24-credit requirement while providing a clear path to graduation for seniors who were on-track to graduate prior to the statewide school closure. This guidance allows seniors to receive credit for any course in which they were passing at the time the school closure started. As a result, schools can provide additional focus on securing credit-earning opportunities and learning for seniors who were not yet passing all required courses at the time of the school closure. In addition, for the final spring term(s), seniors shall be awarded credit based on a Pass/Incomplete (or withdrawal) determination.

As we evaluate this guidance, we will communicate additional details directly from Philomath High School. High school students who have finalized course completion for their diploma will receive individual guidance on post-graduation plans. In addition, seniors who have not finalized course completion for their diploma will also be contacted and an individualized distance-learning plan will be devised to get you to graduation. Most importantly, we will do everything we can to ensure that no senior misses the opportunity to graduate.

We will continue to honor distance learning for all of our students, including online and/or packet opportunities for completing student work. Blodgett Elementary, Clemens Primary, and Philomath Elementary Schools will begin distributing learning packets to students this Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>. All middle school students should sign in to their Google Classes. The Google Classroom codes can be found on the middle school web page. Middle school students requesting work packets should contact the middle school office for individual directions for picking up packets. For all K-12 students, distance learning officially begins on Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. Please know we do not expect it to look exactly like the school days we had only a handful of weeks ago.

If you need to get a Chromebook for your student, you can check one out free for the remainder of the emergency closure. Please contact your school administration to make arrangements. We continue to work with local Internet service providers to obtain support. We will let you know as additional information becomes available.

We will continue to provide free meals from 12:00pm-1:00pm, Monday through Friday, at Clemens Primary School. Breakfast for the following day can be picked up at the same time you pick up lunch. Remember that this service is open to all children under 18 years of age.

We know this COVID-19 outbreak is unlike anything we as parents, students, or educators have ever experienced. Since this closure began, our priority has been and will continue to be our students. We will continue with that focus and do our best to serve you and keep you informed. Thank you for your patience, understanding, and assistance in keeping our district and community safe. Our educators and administrators are committed to being problem-solvers and partners for all students and families in our District. Especially for our high school seniors, we want to ensure that your path to graduation is not interrupted by this pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Buzz Brazeau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Buzz" being more prominent than the last name "Brazeau".

Buzz Brazeau