Date: March 19, 2020

To La Grande School District Families;

The La Grande School District and our staff hope that your family is healthy and safe. We recognize that the global pandemic of COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on the well-being of so many in our state and community. “Social distancing” has become a new way of life as we all work to slow the spread of the virus and reduce the emergent burden on our medical systems. While we had hoped for school to reopen and provide our regular programming on April 1, 2020 it is now apparent that this will not occur as schools have now been directed to remain closed until April 28, 2020.

To serve our students during this closure, La Grande School District staff have been working hard to develop our supplemental distance-learning format that will allow students and families to access our learning services from home supported by their classroom teacher. Based on current guidance from the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon Health Authority, and in partnership with local public health officials we will be providing educational services in this distance-learning format for the next four weeks.

The Oregon Department of Education has recommended that we provide “supplemental education and learning supports to students to the extent practical through independent study and other appropriate options.” To achieve this, teachers and staff will be in contact with your family March 31 – April 1 via email or phone to set up a regular contact plan with your family to support the curriculum that you can access digitally or in physical packets at your student’s school.

A new district webpage linked to our district site at lagrandesd.org has also been created so that families can access curriculum work and additional resources to support your student’s learning. This webpage will go live on April 1st with our first release of curriculum and resources. Our district will be sending out an initial letter regarding this distance-learning program with additional resources entitled Distance Learning Framework for Families and we will have another document titled Accessing My Student’s Teacher and Classroom. These documents should answer some specific questions about this new model for supplemental education.

Some might ask, “Why not move all students to an online education platform?” The move to online mid-semester is a complex process and can be highly disruptive, as online curriculum may not mesh with what has been learned in the classroom to date. Additionally, we believe our teachers are the best source of education for our students and that teacher communication with families is a far better individualized.
La Grande School District recognizes that not all families have internet, computers, or devices that would support an online learning platform and this would not provide an equitable educational solution across our district. Our goal with a packet based distance learning system is to provide all students the opportunity to access curriculum, maintain contact with their teachers, and receive supplemental program support from our Special Education Department, English Language Learner Staff, and various other individual student services in our district. It is our hope that continuing to provide curriculum and instruction in this way will help students maintain their understanding and progress with grade-level skills and easily resume normal activities once schools reopens.

At the high school level, teachers will be working to help students and families earn credits and make progress towards graduation. For seniors, this is not how we had hoped your time in La Grande School District would end. We hope that school will be able to resume this year, so that graduation plans may move forward. As we get closer to graduation and more information is available, we will keep you informed.

We appreciate your patience and support as we navigate COVID-19 and strive to keep all students and staff healthy and safe.

- La Grande School District will continue to provide free lunch to all children 0-18 at any of our three elementary schools from 11:00 - 12:30 daily.

- Families that need technology support (i.e. Chromebook) should contact their local school to access these devices.

- Counseling services will also be available to students who need support during this closure.

If you have additional questions, you should contact your student’s teacher or school administrator. Our staff stand ready to support during this critical time in our community.

Also, please take time to practice social distancing; You can also practice and teach good handwashing and hygiene with your family as well.

Every crisis and challenge presents opportunities. I would like you to consider staying closely connected with your family, friends, and loved ones via phone, email, text, or skype. One thing that is also highly contagious is kindness, patience, love, enthusiasm and a positive attitude. Please share that with one another as often as you can!

Sincerely,

George Mendoza
LGSD Superintendent