

April 8, 2020

1:45 p.m. Update

*RE: Governor Kate Brown closes school campuses through end of current school year, teaching and learning continue. New graduation requirement information.*

Bend-La Pine Schools Families,

Today we learned our students will not return to school campuses this school year, according to an executive order from Gov. Kate Brown. The Governor extended the **closure of school buildings through the end of the current school year**. The extended closure is an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep our community safe and healthy.

While campuses are closed, education continues. Bend-La Pine Schools will continue to serve families and deliver meaningful experiences for students for the duration of our academic year.

We know many of our families are experiencing challenges and hardships during this unprecedented time. Every day seems to bring a new normal and those changes can be stressful for us all. Please remember this one unwavering fact: we are in this together, for as long as it takes. We care deeply about the well-being of each and every student. Please reach out and know that we are here to serve.

This year is also changing for our seniors. Gov. Brown also announced a plan surrounding graduation requirements. We are still digging into her recommendations, but in brief, here is our commitment: the closure **will not impact our seniors' ability to graduate** this June. Our high schools will be reaching out directly to all of our seniors with more information.

The extended closure also means that proms, field trips, graduations, award ceremonies, and simple classroom activities will look and be experienced differently. We are working to reimagine these experiences and want all of our students to have the opportunity for connection, belonging, and optimism. We plan to invite our student leaders to join in planning efforts and look forward to sharing details for these experiences in the near future. We do know that in-person graduation ceremonies will change to virtual ceremonies and/or be delayed. A final decision related to graduation ceremonies will be shared by the end of April.

Families in need, please reach out to our Family Access Network advocates, who are working tirelessly to personally connect families to the resources they need. You can find their contact information, as well as information on other resources on our [Families in Need webpage](#). We know, too, that this time is stressful not just for adults, but for students of all ages. Take a moment to visit our [Student Mental Health webpage](#) and review some of the many resources that are accessible anytime.

From the staff members serving meals to the teachers adapting to remote learning to the families at home juggling work, school and life – we want to say thank you for the kindness you show to one another. We will need patience, resilience, kindness and strength as we move through these next few months. We will persevere through this crisis, as we support one another and grow stronger together.

This experience is testing all of us, but it also serves as a strong reminder that we are a resilient community. There is no place I would rather call home.

Best,

Shay Mikalson, Superintendent