

April 1, 2020

Dear Yellow Springs Families & Staff,

I hope you all are keeping safe and healthy.

Gov. DeWine announced at his daily press conference on Monday, March 30 that Ohio Director of Health (ODH) Director Dr. Amy Acton has issued an amended order that extends the closure of all school buildings to students through midnight on Friday, May 1.

This means that Yellow Springs Schools will continue our distance learning plan for the next four weeks. In my letter dated March 12, I described our initial non-traditional instruction/distance learning plan as one that would keep students connected to their academic studies and would not be new instruction.

Much has changed since March 12, and we must adapt our plan. In the time since my last communication, COVID-19 cases in Ohio have increased to almost 2,600. We have been told by health experts that the surge will be in the next two weeks. Ohio's numbers increase significantly each day. Predictions of those who will fall ill are staggering. In addition to this heightened health situation, this pandemic has had a devastating financial impact. We are feeling that financial impact very much in Yellow Springs and I imagine many of you are feeling it personally.

Our approach to non-traditional instruction/distance learning for the next four weeks (or longer) takes into account the impact of the health and economic challenges many of you are currently facing. We know that what is possible for students (and parents) to do at home is unique for every Yellow Springs family. Because of these unprecedented issues, and because we have great latitude with how we approach schooling in this unique period of time, beginning on Monday, April 6, we are going to simplify our approach to non-traditional instruction/distance learning as follows:

- **TIME:** How much time should students be working in a non-traditional instruction/distance learning environment that has been created because of a global pandemic, the like of which we haven't seen in one hundred years? We know that non-traditional instruction/distance learning is not a direct substitute for a traditional school environment. For the next four weeks (and perhaps longer), we will use the following **daily** time guidelines: K-4 students no more than 60 minutes; 5-6 students no more than 75 minutes; 7-8 students no more than 90 minutes; and 9-12 students no more than 120 minutes.
- **WHAT:** We are now operating in a new normal. To be empathetic to the unique needs of each family in our community, we are utilizing resources from InquirED and taking a thematic, inquiry-based approach to our instruction. This approach is aligned with our vision as a district, is developmentally appropriate, and is consistent across all grade levels. What does this mean? It means that academic content will be framed around an essential question for each week. This focused approach will allow students to continue to learn and grow, and acknowledges the social-emotional toll this situation is putting on both children and parents/families. Extension activities and resources will be available to all students. On our website, under our non-traditional instruction resource section, you will find infographics that detail the ways we will

help students access, connect, engage and assess their work. High school students should check email or Google Classroom to access new instruction. Should you have any questions on how these operate, please reach out to your child's teacher or principal.

- **GRADING:** Our approach to the evaluation of student progress will be simple: 4th Quarter grades will be on a Pass/Fail basis. There are details to work out for some high school courses, and the high school team will communicate with students in the affected classes. All high school students should realize that there is a correlation to both a Pass and a Fail, and that this numeric/alpha correlation will be calculated into a student's grade-point average.
- **SENIORS:** We will follow the guidance of the Ohio Department of Education for our graduating seniors. We have a plan for each senior, and our goal is to get them to the finish line. Counselors will communicate with each senior and their family within the next week. Senior students, probably more than any other group of students, are losing the most. It is my hope that the first communal thing we do, once this is all over, is celebrate their graduation. Only time will tell when that may be.

We now have Chromebooks available for distribution to our students in Kindergarten through Grade 3. Mr. Housh will be communicating with parents on Thursday, April 2, about the Chromebook distribution schedule. For those families who need wifi access, we have a limited number of hotspots available for sign-out. Please reach out to your child's principal should you need internet access.

Please expect communication from your children's teachers regarding their educational plan for at least the next four weeks. As a reminder, you can find a wealth of information on the district website (<https://yssschoools.org>). The [COVID-19](#) link will take you to district letters, public health information, and relevant articles about the virus. The [Non-Traditional Instruction](#) link will take you to educational materials and instructions from each teacher.

We will continue to provide food to our families who utilize free and reduced lunch services and to others who have indicated a need. Any changes in delivery days and/or times will be communicated accordingly.

As I receive additional guidance from the governor or the Ohio Department of Education, I will communicate this to you. I remain committed to communicating with you regularly. Do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Thank you for your continued support in keeping our students, staff, and community safe. Together we will get through this.

Sincerely,



Dr. Terri L. Holden
Superintendent