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De Soto #73 Public School District

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Superintendent's Office

Ensuring learning, growth, and success for all.

April 17, 2020

Dear Dragon Family,

We hope all of our students and their families are faring well, trying new things, having basic needs met, and finding balance in adjustments. Half of the challenge we faced in previous weeks was the unknown regarding the end of our school year. It's no small statement to say we certainly didn't expect the year to end this way, but now that we know more, we can plan better! We can make arrangements for year-end building closures and start looking ahead to careful planning for a productive start when we all return for the next school year. Included in this letter are quick updates on a few currently relevant items. THANK YOU, families! We can't wait for our students to return to our buildings and hope you all stay well.

Dr. Doréan Dow
Assistant Superintendent

Third Quarter Grades and Return of Work

Our district is committed to providing equitable learning opportunities for all students, which is why we took a hold harmless approach to learning over the closure and did not introduce new material or penalize students for their inability to complete work independent of typical in-school supports they were used to. Since we were able to complete the third quarter prior to the closure, students' third quarter grades will be students' final grades.

If students have completed work in an effort to *improve* their grade over the closure, they can submit it either digitally via Google Classroom (if available) or by dropping hard copies off during upcoming opportunities to pick up personal items and return school items. (Buildings are currently planning details of these pick-up and drop-off times and will be in touch directly with their families when finalized.)

Some might question this approach to grading, arguing students might lose motivation to continue to stay engaged with the materials they have while at home. Please remind our young learners that school is more than grades. Each year's content is essential for mastering the next year's content. While it might be tempting for them to stop working on school work over the next months, especially as we lead into summer, we encourage them to keep not only the *content* they've learned fresh, but also the *habits of mind* and *work behaviors* they will need when we return to our buildings.

Final phase of instructional resources

Phase II of our instructional resources is still available on our district COVID-19 page, and required hard copies were mailed out last week--please be patient as they make it to you if you are awaiting them. We will send one small final set of resources home with report cards at the end of the month. We encourage you to continue using any of the previous materials we've shared to revisit prior concepts.

Virtual Summer School for Grades 7-12

At the April 16 board meeting, the board approved a virtual summer school session for students entering the 7th-12 grades and any current seniors needing missing credits to graduate. These courses will be developed by De Soto teachers and utilize resources and programs currently available to our students. Details are being finalized and communication will follow shortly. Please encourage your incoming 7th to 12th graders to gear up for this opportunity to make up for some lost learning time.