

# BEARCAT HAPPENINGS

Hermann Advertiser-Courier

## by Gasconade County R-1 Superintendent: Dr. Scott Smith

The last seven weeks have certainly been a challenge for everyone across the country, as well as throughout the Gasconade County R-1 School District. Although we have all had our lives affected in one way or another by COVID-19, we are very fortunate that we have not seen a major outbreak of the virus in our area. Thank you to everyone who has made sacrifices and continue to make sacrifices to keep our community healthy. Thank you to the medical personnel and essential workers who have continued to be on the front lines willing to help at a moment's notice.

As a school leader, I certainly had hoped that we would be able to be back in school this year. It saddens me to think of all the end of the year activities our students are missing. However, we too must do what is required to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, as a district, we are working extremely hard to come up with different avenues to support our students and make this a special year. I am so proud our faculty, staff, students, parents, and community for the extra effort they have put forth. Also, I want to thank everyone for their understanding of the variety of adjustments we have had to make as an educational institution.

We realize that the challenge of remote learning has not been easy. We also realize that there have been some complications which we have had to work through. One of the areas that we knew would be an issue and certainly has caused problems is the availability of high speed internet and broadband capabilities in areas of the district. Unfortunately, the lack of high speed internet and enough broadband has caused some major issues for students living outside of Hermann. I am hopeful that after this event, we can work together to make much needed improvements.

As many of you know, our district was as prepared as possible for the school closure by having Alternative Methods of Instruction (AMI) ready upon dismissal. Since that time, we have issued a total of 3 student AMI packets. Students grades PK-4 have been provided paper AMI work packets. Students grades 5-12 with internet access were provided school issued Chromebooks and the ability to download their assignments. Those students without internet access were provided paper AMI work packets. As a parent and administrator, I have been very pleased with the assignments provided, given the circumstances and challenges. I have also been proud of our teachers for continuing to making contact with students via phone, email, and Zoom meetings. They continue to make a positive difference despite the circumstances. Thank you teachers and staff!

I also commend our meal service staff, building administrators, and district paraprofessionals for their outstanding service in providing meals to our students during this time. Meals will continue through the last day of school, May 14. At this time, we are serving over 300 students per day in six locations.

The AMIs will also continue through May 14, the scheduled last day of school. On May 14 & 15 students may return any school work, textbooks, library books, technology, and anything else that has been issued by the school. All personal belongings will be bagged up and waiting for students to pick up at their school. Additional information will be forthcoming from building principals.

With school not resuming this spring, there are still some special events we would like for our students to experience. Therefore, while taking all safety precautions outlined by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) we plan to continue to hold a few events. The first event will be the senior awards night. This event will be videoed and shared with the seniors and our community Friday, May 8th at 7:00 p.m. The video will be posted to the district Facebook page and the district website. Although we would love for our students to be able to accept the awards in person, this is our best option for now. Thank you to all the donors that so generously donate scholarships and make this possible for our students.

Eighth grade promotion is scheduled for Friday, May 8th. At the time of writing this article, we plan to hold this event virtually. Students and parents will be contacted by Ms. Buschmann, middle school principal with specific details.

A special kindergarten celebration will be held on Wednesday, May 13th at 6:30 p.m. in the high school parking lot. Due to a limited number of parking places and practicing social distancing, we ask that each family only bring one vehicle. Mrs. Brune and the kindergarten teachers will be leading the celebration and will provide specific details to parents.

As many of you know, high school graduation was originally scheduled for May 14th. However, due to the current CDC recommendations and Missouri state guidelines we have chosen to postpone graduation until Sunday, June 14th with a rain date of Monday, June 15th. If COVID-19 regulations are still in place and keep us from having graduation in June, we have set aside Sunday, July 12th as an alternative date, with a rain date of Monday, July 13th. This year, we are planning to have graduation outside at Bearcat Memorial Stadium.

Although graduation has been postponed, we still want to celebrate the last day of school for our seniors. Therefore, we will be holding a special senior parade on Thursday, May 14th at 6:00 p.m. in Hermann. The parade route will follow the regular parade route starting at Gutenberg Street and ending at the high school parking lot. Students may participate by driving their own vehicles or ride school buses that will be available. We invite our students, parents and community members to line the parade route to cheer for our seniors. More information will be forthcoming from Mr. Stutzman.

Summer school is tentatively scheduled for July 7-31. Typically summer school is for grades K-6; however, we are considering expanding courses to upper grade levels. Of course, it is all dependent on the COVID-19 situation. We will communicate more information as we are able.

At the board meeting last week, Mr. Matthew Mueller was hired as the new middle school principal. He will be a strong addition to our Bearcat team! We wish Ms. Buschmann all the best as she has accepted an assistant superintendent position at North Callaway School District. We thank Ms. Buschmann for her many years of dedicated service to Gasconade County R-1.

Also, as an update to our patrons, the high school entrance area is experiencing some structural issues as the bricks are pulling away from the building. We are working with a structural engineer, architect and commercial contractors to develop a solution. The area is currently marked with orange construction fencing. We anticipate the needed improvements being completed this summer.

Thank you for your continued support of the Gasconade County R-1 School District. Please continue to stay healthy and keep learning! As always, go Bearcats!



From the desk of  
Dr. Scott Smith, Superintendent

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