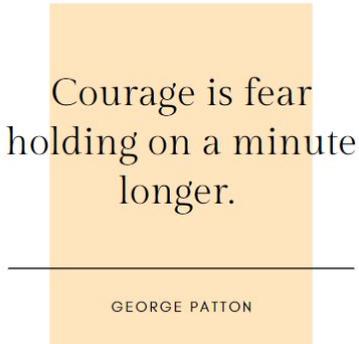


**Branson Public Schools  
District Closure  
Update April 16, 2020**

**Questions and Answers**



Governor Parson’s announcement April 9 to close all public schools for the remainder of the academic year has triggered a whole range of emotions for students and staff. Some are feeling a sense of loss because they won’t be able say goodbye in a “traditional” sense to their students, concern for fellow staff members they won’t “see” for a few weeks, anxiety about getting into classrooms, and in some cases, joy that a decision has been made and we can start moving forward. Regardless of the emotions you’re feeling, we understand, relate and empathize with you.

Though our classrooms are not buzzing with activity, hallways are empty, and playgrounds are quiet, there is plenty of learning happening in new, creative ways. Staying connected must remain our priority through the “last” day of school and beyond. Branson district employees’ commitment to serving our 4,831 students is second-to-none and we will maintain our mission to educate all students over the next several weeks.

The district will continue to deliver up-to-date information as appropriate. In addition, the district has created a dedicated [link](#) on our website to post all correspondence from the district and guidance from governing officials. The district will also use Twitter @bransonschools, the district Facebook page and SchoolMessenger to deliver pertinent information.

**Quick Links:** The links below will connect you to specific headings with new content added to the top of each heading.

<p><a href="#"><u>School Calendar</u></a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Updated - School Closure</li><li>• Updated - Graduation Postponed</li><li>• Updated - MSHSAA Spring Sports</li></ul> <p><a href="#"><u>Community Resources: Food Distribution / Childcare</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Family and Community Questions</u></a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New - PreSchool Interest for 2020-21</li><li>• New - Kindergarten Registration</li></ul>	<p><a href="#"><u>Teaching and Learning: PreK-Elementary</u></a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Updated - Weeks 5 and 6 Learning Packets</li><li>• New - 3rd Quarter Report Cards</li></ul> <p><a href="#"><u>Teaching and Learning: Secondary (7-12)</u></a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New - Term 5 Grades</li></ul> <p><a href="#"><u>Special Services</u></a></p>
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**School Calendar**

**[How long will Branson Public Schools be closed? - Updated](#)**

Due to the executive order by Governor Parson on April 9, 2020, all Missouri public schools will remain closed through the remainder of the 2019-20 academic year. We appreciate Governor Parson’s leadership and his decision to protect our students, our communities, and our state from the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

### ***How will the district closure affect graduation? - Updated***

Graduation, which was scheduled for Friday, May 8, 2020, at 7:30 p.m. in Pirate Stadium, has been **postponed** and will be rescheduled when it's safe to gather and celebrate.

### ***Will school activities and dances, including MSHSAA activities, continue during the closure? - Updated***

Following Governor Parson's announcement on April 9, 2020, directing all schools to close for the remainder of the school year, the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) has canceled all of the remaining post-season events for the 2019-20 school year.

### ***Will the last day of school be adjusted by the closure?***

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education announced school districts will not be required to make up calendar hours lost due to COVID-19. With this announcement, Branson Public Schools' last day of the 2019-2020 academic year is May 15, 2020.

### ***Will School Board elections still be held on April 7, 2020?***

Per Governor Parson, all municipal elections have been moved to June 2, 2020.

## **Community Resources**

### ***What should I do if I am concerned about students' mental health during this time of school closure?***

The social distancing required to address COVID-19 has particularly strong implications for teens and students. Disruptions to school, sports seasons, and social events may mean the loss of important opportunities to socialize and to work toward personal goals. For many kids, this may increase the risk for social isolation, depression, and anxiety. If you are concerned your student may be experiencing depression or anxiety, please feel free to reach out to your building counselors. You may also refer your student for mental health services through our Burrell partnership by contacting Molly at 417-761-5513 to let her know about your referral.

### ***What is the district's plan to provide students with access to nutrition services?***

The district is able to feed all students 18 years of age and under with free Grab-and-Go meals while the district is closed. The district has devised a plan that includes meal pick-up services at Buchanan Elementary from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Monday-Wednesday-Friday, beginning **April 6, 2020**. We are consolidating our pick-up dates to better serve you.

In addition, the district is delivering free Grab-and-Go meals to 11 locations throughout the district on Monday-Wednesday-Friday from 11:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. Linked is a [food service distribution location](#) sheet.

### ***How is the district supporting health care professionals?***

The district is working with Cox Branson, Mercy Clinics, Jordan Valley, and Burrell Behavioral Health to provide childcare for healthcare providers and first responders. Care is provided to eligible students from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday at Cedar Ridge Elementary School.

### ***Will Burrell services be provided while school is closed?***

Burrell sessions will not be held at the buildings while school is closed. Burrell Behavioral Health is reaching out to families and offering home visits, clinic visits, and telephone sessions. If a family member has not heard from Burrell, they can reach out to the clinician or Cristin Martinez, Assistant Director of School-Based Services, at 417-761-5407.

***If a student was referred for Burrell services before spring break, will they be contacted for an intake/evaluation?***

Yes. Burrell is still open and working to contact families of any students who have been referred for Burrell services. Burrell is completing intakes/evaluations via phone, Zoom session, and at the Branson Meadows office. If a family has not heard from Burrell to schedule an appointment, they can reach out to Molly at 417-761-5513 to schedule the initial intake/evaluation.

## **Family and Community Questions**

***How do I express interest in the district's preschool program for the 2020-21 academic year? - NEW***

Branson Public Schools will continue to offer a high-quality PreK program with possible expansion for the 2020-21 school year. Please fill out the [Branson School PreK interest form](#) by May 1, 2020, if you have a child who will be 3 or 4 years of age before August 1, 2020. The results of the community feedback will be used as guidance for planning and program expansion. If you have any questions, please call Cedar Ridge Primary Office at 417-336-1887 for assistance.

***How do I enroll my kindergarten child for the 2020-2021 academic year? - NEW***

Branson Public Schools will provide online registration for students entering kindergarten for the 2020-21 school year. More information will be coming in May regarding this process.

***Are we enrolling new students for the 2019-2020 year in the district during this time of school closure?***

Yes. Per DESE, we will enroll new students in our district. We are using the [self-registration feature](#) in SIS for new families in Branson. To enroll as a **new** family in our district, follow the directions on this [google doc](#). A new family means none of the students in the family are currently attending any of the schools in the district or none of the students have ever been enrolled in the district. If you are not considered a "new family" enrollment, then please contact **Angela Torix** at [torixa@branson.k12.mo.us](mailto:torixa@branson.k12.mo.us) for help with re-enrolling your student. She will be receiving/sending needed documents by email to the enrolling parent and will also be in communication via email with buildings when a new student enrolls.

***Have any of Branson's food or childcare volunteers tested positive for the COVID-19 virus?***

No. According to the Taney County Health Department, district employees who have volunteered in the areas of food distribution and/or childcare are not among any of the confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus in the county. Extreme safety precautions are taken to ensure the health and welfare of all involved with food distribution and daycare procedures.

***While school is closed, how can I retrieve my student's personal items?***

The district has received a lot of requests from families to pick up student personal items. At this time, buildings are closed to the public due to the Governor's Stay Home order issued on April 6, 2020. The district will work with public health officials to determine when a return to the buildings is feasible.

***What do we do if a family does not have internet access?***

You can let families know about a program with Suddenlink/Altice USA [linked here](#). Parents can use this link to inquire about receiving free internet access for 60 days.

***Will the extended closure change Summer School dates?***

As of now, summer school dates and times will remain the same. Information about summer school enrollment will be posted at a later date.

- Elementary June 1-25 (Monday-Thursday from 7:45-2:45)
- Secondary June 1-18 (Monday-Thursday from 7:30-2:30)

## **Teaching and Learning: PreK through Elementary**

### ***Will the district continue to provide learning packets while school is closed? - NEW***

The district is making plans to continue to send learning packets through May 15, 2020. Weeks 5 and 6 learning packets will be mailed on Monday, April 27, 2020.

### ***When will elementary (K-6) 3rd quarter report cards be emailed to families? - NEW***

Elementary offices will send 3rd quarter report cards via email on Tuesday, April 21, 2020.

### ***When will Weeks 3 and 4 learning packets for PK-6 students be mailed?***

Learning packets for Weeks 3 and 4 were mailed out on Monday, April 13, 2020.

### ***How can I stay connected with my Parent Educator?***

The Parents as Teachers program will continue via virtual visits which can consist of phone calls, FaceTime, Zoom, etc. This communication will continue to support families with all three areas of emphasis: development-centered parenting, parent-child interaction, and family well-being. Parents may call or email PAT educators directly, email the PAT Coordinator, Robin Mackey, at [mackeyr@branson.k12.mo.us](mailto:mackeyr@branson.k12.mo.us), or email Dr. Worley at [worleys@branson.k12.mo.us](mailto:worleys@branson.k12.mo.us). If you are new to the PAT program, but would like to participate, we would love to have you and are taking new families at this time. Contact Robin Mackey or Dr. Worley via email to enroll in the PAT program or call the Cedar Ridge Primary office at 417-336-1887.

## **Teaching and Learning: Secondary (7-12)**

### ***When will Term 5 grades be sent to secondary students and families? - Updated***

Branson Junior High sent grade cards to families via email on Friday, April 10, 2020. Branson High School will email grade cards to families on Friday, April 17, 2020. Although grades will be sent to families, students may continue to submit missing or late assignments for Term 5 during the remainder of second semester to improve their grades. Assignments should be submitted to teachers via Canvas or email.

### ***What is the Term 6 learning expectation for 7th-12th grade students?***

Term 6 began on April 6, 2020, and teachers moved forward with virtual learning opportunities for students. The expectation is for teachers to stay connected with their students and provide **two** relevant learning opportunities designed around the district's priority standards per course each week. Each assignment will be added to the gradebook. At the end of Term 6, teachers will review students' Term 4 and Term 5 grades and only use Term 6 grades to improve a student's overall semester average.

Alternative paper copy assignments will be made available upon request from students/parents who do not have internet access. Furthermore, paper copies of each assignment will be available in the security entrance at both the Junior High and High School for students and parents for pick-up Monday through Friday during the office hours of 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Alternative paper assignments should be returned digitally when possible such as taking pictures of the assignments, scanning, or emailing them to the student's teacher. If digital submission is not a possibility, contact the building office and arrangements will be made to drop off the packet.

### ***How does school closure affect Dual Credit and AP class assignments?***

AP and Dual Credit courses have additional accountability measures and students need to stay on-track with their learning even while assignments are considered optional.

## **Secondary Assessment**

### ***Will students enrolled in End-of-Course (EOC) classes (Algebra 1 or 2, Geometry, English 2, Biology, Government) still be required to take these state exams as a prerequisite to graduation?***

Students currently enrolled in EOC classes during the 2019-20 year will be exempt from completing the course-specific state exam as a graduation requirement. Students will be required to take all other EOC exams as a graduation requirement.

### ***Has there been an announcement regarding the ACT and SAT?***

ACT recently rescheduled the April 4, 2020, national test date to June 13, 2020. All impacted students will receive an email from ACT informing them of the postponement and providing instructions on how to change their registration to June or a later date. The May SAT has been canceled at this time.

### ***How will school closure affect AP classes and exams?***

Advanced Placement (AP) testing will be modified this year with new at-home testing options. Students will take a 45-minute online free response exam at home. Testing details will be available on April 3, 2020. Starting on March 25, 2020, AP is providing students access to [free remote learning resources](#) that include AP review courses delivered by AP teachers from across the country.

## **Secondary A+**

### ***How does school closure affect A+ Students and qualifications?***

The Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development (MDHEWD) has temporarily reduced or suspended certain A+ Scholarship eligibility requirements including:

- 50 Hours of Unpaid Tutoring/Mentoring. The A+ Scholarship requires students to complete 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring. For 2020 seniors, the number of tutoring/mentoring hours has been reduced temporarily to 25 to accommodate those students who are unable to complete 50 hours prior to high school graduation.
- The Algebra I EOC requirement is waived for all 2020 high school seniors, including those who have already taken the exam but did not meet the requirement as well as those who have not yet taken the exam. Waiver of this requirement also exempts 2020 seniors from having to meet the ACT math subscore/high school GPA alternative.

## **Special Services**

### ***How will we hold IEP/504 meetings while school is closed?***

Annual IEP/504 due dates are NOT extended due to temporary school closure. As has always been the case, the 60-day evaluation timeline between parent consent and eligibility determination can be extended by the number of days students are out of school. The Process Coordinators and special education/504 case managers are working to conduct required IEP/504 meetings via telephone or teleconferencing.

### ***How will students with disabilities receive “services” while school is closed?***

Because the district is offering educational opportunities for all students (online, printed packets, etc.), students with disabilities must receive appropriate accommodations and modifications to any work provided. Special education case managers are in communication with parents and students about their needs, but general educators should also implement accommodations and modifications when “assigning” work. Although special education “services” do not look the same as usual, teachers and therapists are sending home appropriate work to allow students with significant needs to continue progressing toward their IEP goals.