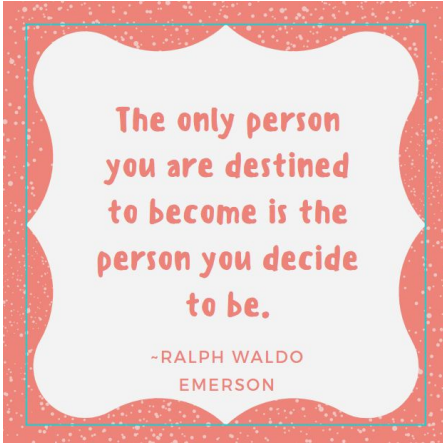


**Branson Public Schools
District Closure
Update April 30, 2020**

Questions and Answers



This update marks the end of Week 6 that Branson Public Schools have been closed to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus, which has disrupted our daily routines and lives. In these times of “social distancing,” I’ve come to appreciate the role that public education can and should play within the community. During the last six weeks, Branson teachers, support staff, and administrators have organized a food distribution center, conducted wellness checks and supported our healthcare providers with high-quality childcare. I am so proud of the amazing efforts of our teachers to stay connected to their students in new and creative ways.

It’s evident that Branson Public Schools are equipped to do much more than teach students to read, write and solve problems. As a community partner, Branson Public Schools have a rich tradition of supporting our students and families by providing access to early childhood programming, linking families to health and counseling services, serving students with special needs, and engaging students with before and after school activities.

For over 100 years, Branson Public Schools have been blessed with the support of a community that values public school, supports teachers and seeks solutions to complex problems. Patrons have given of their time, resources and talent to support our efforts in meeting the needs of our students and community. On behalf of the entire district, thank you for your steadfast support and encouragement throughout this pandemic. We will get through this and any other challenges, because it’s the “Branson Way” of serving and supporting each other.

We are committed to ongoing communication throughout the days and weeks ahead. As more information is available, we will communicate directly with you 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, 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>School Calendar</p> <p>Community Resources Food Distribution / Childcare</p> <p>Family and Community Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated - Kindergarten Enrollment	<p>Teaching and Learning: PreK-Elementary Updated - Final Learning Packets</p> <p>Teaching and Learning: Secondary (7-12)</p> <p>Special Services</p>
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School Calendar

How long will Branson Public Schools be closed?

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?

After careful thought, consideration, and informal feedback from the senior class of 2020, Branson High School is excited to announce the week of July 27th as Senior Week. The week is dedicated to celebrating and honoring the accomplishments, commitments and talents of our senior class. The week will include senior awards, prom, painting the hill, sports/activity nights and will culminate with Graduation of the Class of 2020 on August 1, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. at Pirate Stadium. We recognize these are uncertain times and that dates, times, and social distancing protocols may dictate and interfere with these plans; therefore, we must all be flexible in our approach.

BHS Senior Week

July 27 – August 1, 2020

- Monday, July 27 Senior Awards Night (Auditorium)
- Tuesday, July 28 Activity Recognition
- Wednesday, July 29 Prom (Hilton Convention Center)
- Thursday, July 30 Activity Recognition
- Friday, July 31 Graduation Practice and Paint Senior Hill (AM)
- Saturday, August 1 Graduation (9:00 a.m, Pirate Stadium)

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

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 resources are available to help families struggling during this difficult time?

Branson Schools social workers are available to assist families during this difficult time. They can help connect families to resources in the community that would best fit their needs. You can reach the social workers by emailing them at lf@branson.k12.mo.us or by calling their office at 417-336-1854. Below are just a few of the many community and faith-based groups that are providing supports for children and families in need to help us bridge the gaps:

[Christian Action Ministries \(CAM\)](#) is providing drive-through food assistance to those in need in Taney County with drive-through distribution at CAM-Branson. Please contact 417-334-1157 for more information.

[Elevate Branson](#) (formerly known as Jesus was Homeless) is providing meal delivery to extended stay motels. They are also offering hygiene kits and other resources. You may contact them at 417-335-9915.

[The Branson Loop](#) is providing free transportation Monday-Friday from 10:00-12:00 to Christian Action Ministries, Elevate Branson, and Faith Community Health. It is recommended that families call the day before the ride is needed. Their phone number is 417-320-6035.

[Bridge of Faith Community Church](#) in Rockaway Beach is available to support families with drive-thru food items. Contact the church for more information at info@bridgeoffaithcc.com or 417-561-0777.

The [Missouri Department of Social Services](#) is helping families who may be struggling by offering expanded benefits with food, health care, and other critical needs. Visit their website for more information or to apply.

Taney County Health Department can assist families with enrollment in the [Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\) program](#) which provides assistance in purchasing healthy foods. These benefits may also be available if your family has experienced the loss of one or more jobs due to the Stay at Home Orders. Call the Taney County Health Department WIC Office at 417-334-4544 for more information.

[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.

[What mental health services are available for students and families?](#)

If your student is currently enrolled in Burrell Behavioral Health service then Burrell is offering clinic visits and virtual visits. If you need to set up an appointment you can reach out to your student's clinician or contact Cristin Martinez, Assistant Director of School-Based Services, at 417-761-5407.

The social distancing required of 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. Burrell Behavioral Health has also created a guide for [parents](#) and [students](#) to help you be aware of the signs of 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. Parents may also refer their student for mental health services Burrell by contacting Molly at 417-761-5513 and let her know you would like to do a self-referral.

Family and Community Questions

How do I enroll my kindergarten-age child for the 2020-2021 academic year? - Updated

Branson Public Schools are excited to welcome and register Kindergarten students for the 2020-2021 academic year. The first day of kindergarten is an important day in a child's life. However, before leaping into the new school year, Branson teachers and families need to partner now with a few small steps to ensure a smooth first day of school for everyone. For registration information, use this [link](#)... It's as easy as 1-2-3.

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 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](#).

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? - Updated

The district is making plans to continue to send learning packets through May 15, 2020. The last learning packets will be mailed on Monday, May 11, 2020.

If my child is not receiving their learning packet how do I update our address?

You can email your teacher the updated address. The district will make the change in our student information system.

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, or email Dr. Worley at 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?

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.