



THE DISTRICT

Donna Independent School District

"THE DISTRICT"

July 16, 2020

Dear Donna ISD Community,

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We hope that you are safe and enjoying your summer break. As you may have heard, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc across the globe including in our Rio Grande Valley communities. Because of the increase in the number of positive cases in our area, Dr. Ivan Melendez (in his capacity as Hidalgo County Local Health Authority) issued an order Tuesday, July 14, 2020 that prevents both public and private schools from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade from returning to campus for in-person instruction until after Sept. 27, 2020. The order goes on to say that instruction may be provided through virtual, remote, or distance learning only. It also states Administrators, teachers and staff may conduct or facilitate the remote learning process, or other operations, while on campus provided they follow all CDC guidelines which include social distancing and wearing facial coverings at all times. To view the entire order visit (www.hidalgocounty.us).

The decision not to open schools for on-campus instruction at the start of the school year was made in collaboration with Donna ISD and surrounding school district superintendents to protect our students, teachers and staff, and help reduce the surge in coronavirus cases. With this in mind, we will now be focusing our efforts on preparing for a robust online learning instruction so that we will be ready when school begins Monday, Aug. 24th. On that note, we would like to inform you that the iPads and Chromebooks we ordered are expected to arrive in the next couple of weeks and delivered to students in time for the new school year. We are also excited to announce that we will be submitting a proposal to the Donna ISD School Board for the purchase of around a dozen towers to be installed within the Donna ISD jurisdiction. This will allow for wifi access for most if not all students in our district. If everything goes as planned, this project will be completed by late September or early October. Academic material will also be made available at the campus level as a final option.

Please rest assured that we will also continue working behind the scenes to prepare for on-campus instruction for when it comes time to safely reopen our schools. As you may remember district administration created a task force (in May) to begin researching and developing a plan with different scenarios in mind while waiting for guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and orders from state and county leaders. Donna ISD's Task Force members, which consisted of a diverse group of stakeholders, were assigned to one of five critical subcommittees (Instruction, Wellness and Safety, District Operations, School Operations and Technology). The group devoted countless hours in zoom meetings where they discussed and developed a return-to-school road map. This detailed information, along with TEA's guidance recently released on how schools should deliver instruction, will help us move forward. We will share the district's plan for both online and in-person instruction with the community July 30th.

We will provide updates as the new school year approaches via email, website, and through our official social media accounts. For now, we want to thank you for your patience and understanding as we work diligently to create the safest possible learning environment for our students, teachers and staff.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hafedh Azaiez
Superintendent of Schools