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April 1, 2020

Superintendent of Public Instruction
Kirsten Baesler
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Dept 201
Bismarck, ND 58505-0440

Dear Superintendent Baesler,

Please find attached the proposed plan from Bishop Ryan Catholic School to respond to the unique COVID-19 situation with regard to fulfilling our educational obligations in accordance with Governor Burgum's guidance to schools laid out in his March 22nd executive order. Thank you for your leadership and guidance in this difficult moment. We are poised to do our part to make the best of this situation for our students and families whom count on us to educate at a high level in season and out of season.

This document has been discussed, reviewed, and approved by our entire administration, as well as by the members of our board of directors.

Sincerely,

Fr. Jady Nelson
President

Educational Plan in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic

Goal: To maintain the provision of high-quality continuous instruction and student services during the COVID-19 pandemic by utilizing distance learning for all Bishop Ryan Catholic School students in the event that it is not recommended or allowed for face to face instruction to be delivered to all or part of our student population.

Fundamental Considerations of the Plan

- According to CDC *Considerations for Closure of School*, “short to medium closures do not impact the epicurve of COVID-19 or available health care measures (e.g., hospitalizations). There may be some impact of much longer closures (8 weeks, 20 weeks) further into community spread, but that modelling also shows that other mitigation efforts (e.g., handwashing, home isolation) have more impact on both spread of disease and health care measures. In other countries, those places which closed school (e.g., Hong Kong) have not had more success in reducing spread than those that did not (e.g., Singapore)” (CDC website).
 - Long-term disruptions of instruction make it more likely that students will regress or require remediation in their learning. Thus, it is important to maintain continuity in learning despite the inability for students to attend school in person, should that become impossible or imprudent.
 - We do not know the duration of the disruption that COVID-19 will cause to traditional in-person classroom instruction. Our intention is to satisfy the requirements of North Dakota Century Code 15.1-06-04 within the time frame outlined by our 2019-2020 school calendar through employing fully continuous distance education for all Bishop Ryan Catholic School students.
 - The Board of Directors for Bishop Ryan Catholic School has directed the administration to continue to explore ways and means to provide face-to-face instruction for our elementary and early-childhood students if it is deemed to be safe by public health professionals. Any implementation plan to reintegrate students would be done in close collaboration with local medical professionals from First District Health and Trinity Hospital in Minot, ND, and in accordance with CDC and NDDOH best practices and guidance. We believe that due to the small size of our school and our small class sizes, social distancing and hygienic practices integrated into in-person instruction may more effectively protect our families at school than at the daycare situations that they are currently being placed in while school is closed.
- To this end, our plan prioritizes reintegration of early-childhood and elementary grades into the school building, while beginning to practice distance education for all students in the case that reintegration of students is not possible or prudent.

Education Plan

In accordance with Governor Burgum's directive for schools to submit distance learning plans by March 27th, I hereby submit the following assurances and details of the plan for Bishop Ryan Catholic School.

Student Reintegration Plan: Upon permission from the Governor and the BRCS Board of Directors, BRCS would look at reintegrating its student population to face-to-face instruction beginning with preK through 5th grade classes. The largest classroom section within these grade levels is seventeen students. We would employ the following mitigation strategies in accord with CDC guidance:

1. Pre-entry screening for travel and symptoms: Prior to any student being readmitted into the classroom they would have to pass a screening designed to limit the potential unknowingly bringing the virus into the school. That screening process would be done in collaboration with medical professionals dealing with this pandemic.
2. Social Distancing: Students would remain in their self-contained classrooms with the exception of music, recess, and physical education. Lunch would be served in brown-bags to the classrooms. Student work-spaces would be spread as far apart as feasible. In some cases, this would achieve the six-foot recommendation, in others it would fall short of six feet. "No touch" activities would be employed for recess and P.E. No groups of more than 20 people would be in the same space for any extended period of time during the day.
3. Hygienic/Sanitary Practices: All classrooms would be supplied with disinfectant sprays/wipes according to the CDC recommendations. All workspaces and touchpoints would be sanitized after use. Students and employees would be trained in proper hand-washing techniques.
4. Reduction of student mixing: Fire exit plans would be utilized for ingress and egress protocols, including staggering of ingress and egress for different levels.

Distance Learning Plan for preK-12

By April 1st, BRCS will be ready to deliver instruction through virtual classrooms based on the platform of Microsoft Teams in order to both meet the educational needs of our students and satisfy the mitigation strategy of social distancing. We are ready to implement and will begin our distance learning on Thursday, March 26th. In order to accomplish this, we have done or are in the process of doing the following:

- Communication Plan: All parents/guardians at BRCS currently receive notifications via an active e-mail in our learning management system, RenWeb. We will continue to utilize e-mail as our primary source of communication to parents. Over and above RenWeb, we will be utilizing Microsoft Teams as a means of communication with students. Non-essential means of communication also include our school's mobile application and official BRCS social media accounts.

- Student Attendance: BRCS will be using both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, with a preference for asynchronous instruction. The transference of our normal curriculum and student workload to the digital platform may require a modification of the amount of work being expected of our children depending on their age. Our curriculum far exceeds the minimum instructional hours required by NDCC. Therefore, student attendance in situations of asynchronous instruction will be determined through successful and timely completion of student assignments monitored on-line and student interaction with the teacher and his or her peers. In situations of synchronous instruction, attendance will be taken at the time of instruction.
- Student Access to an Educator: All students have access to an educator through the Microsoft Teams platform. The accessibility of teachers to students is crucial in all preK-12 learning. Distance education is no different. Teachers will continue to be required to work the equivalent of their contracted hours. During this time, they will create and record standards-aligned lessons through the use of *Microsoft Teams for Learning*, which is something to which our teachers and students had access prior to this pandemic. Teachers will also be present in the virtual classrooms and required to be available for students and/or parents to communicate real-time to answer questions or provide additional assistance. BRCS faculty will be using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction via Microsoft Teams.
- Teacher, Parent, and Student Training: In order to effectively move to an on-line platform of education we have undertaken to train our entire administration, staff, and faculty, along with parents and students on the Microsoft Teams platform. BRCS employees were trained in person on Tuesday, March 17th by our IT director. Continuous training has been available to BRCS employees ever since. Remote training of parents and students is happening through sending a descriptive PowerPoint presentation, utilizing the training videos available within Teams, and setting up help-desk support to field calls from parents and students with problems or questions.
- Human Resource Policies: BRCS administration has implemented an *ad hoc* policy that allows faculty and staff to work from home, while ensuring that they are paid. Hourly staff are being asked to perform work outside of their job descriptions in order to maintain their hourly wage.
- Ensuring student access to devices: All families at BRCS have at least one working e-mail on file. We utilized needs assessment surveys to identify the needs of our students and families with regard to student devices required to access on-line learning. Those surveys revealed a small number of students whom would require the school to provide such a device. To this end, we have purchased devices and are providing them to students at no-cost. All BRCS students have the necessary devices to learn on-line.

- Ensuring that all students have access to reliable, high-speed internet: Part of the technology needs assessments we sent out included information about internet access. The families that did not have reliable, high-speed internet have been put in touch with the internet provider SRT, based out of Minot, which will provide internet access free for four months to students.
- Students requiring assistive technologies: Microsoft Teams has the function of “Immersion Reader”, which allows all assignments to be read to them digitally. All devices are capable of recording oral presentations, so no scribes are needed. We have no students with other needs in this area.
- Social emotional learning: Our counseling program will continue to operate while distance learning is in place. This includes our virtue program, resource room one-on-one help, and social-emotional lessons.
- Provision of high-quality, standards-based, age-appropriate education: BRCS is ready to provide an education that is high-quality in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Our teachers will continue to offer our own standards-based curriculum, just through a different interface. Instruction will be age-appropriate: See below for the specific details.

PreK and Elementary

All classes, such as music, physical education, art, and faith formation will continue to provide instruction and assessment for all students.

PreK

Bishop Ryan Catholic School believes strongly that hands-on learning is an important part of early childhood education. Therefore, a majority of learning standards will be met through family activities suggested by the teacher. For example, one such activity might be, count the number of forks in the silverware drawer. Count the number of spoons. Is the number of forks and spoons equal? If not, are there more forks or spoons? Draw a picture of the forks and spoons and write the number next to each. In addition, there will be learning worksheets and art activities sent home for completion with parents. Through the use of Microsoft Teams, teachers will demonstrate lessons, have “Calendar Time”, and record themselves reading stories aloud to the students. Students will return their completed work to the teacher or submit a picture of their work for the teacher to monitor progress.

Elementary

Curriculum content access: Grade level content will continue through the use of all the curricular materials previously being used within the classroom. Many of these materials consist of pre-printed workbooks for subjects such as phonics, literature, spelling, Latin, grammar, and math. Additional novels and texts, which typically are not sent home, will be sent home so students have access to all curricular materials needed. Teachers will present lessons online, both live and pre-recorded. Teachers may also use audio clips recorded by the teacher, video calls or written chat with the

teacher through Microsoft Teams. In addition to Teams, there are other online tools which had been implemented by many of the teachers prior to this distance learning situation, such as Quizlet, Spelling City, Xtra Math, Pearson Realize, Class Dojo, and Remind. These online tools will continue to be used and/or implemented to help students/parents access grade level content presented in a variety of ways to help meet the needs of diversity in learning.

Student assessment and evaluation: As is typical within a classroom, there are multiple methods an elementary teacher uses for student evaluation from observation to formal tests. Teachers will continue to use a variety of these methods. Workbooks, other worksheets, and projects will continue to be used and will be assessed by teachers when students submit pictures of their completed work or by returning completed work on a weekly basis. Teachers will have live lessons with students in which students will be able to participate, respond and receive feedback immediately. Small marker boards were sent home with students so they can participate and hold up their marker board to show their teacher their work. In addition to those more formative type assessments, summative assessments will also continue to be used through the use of Teams or by sending home assessments. A statement about academic integrity was sent home to parents reminding them of school expectations and the expectation of their assistance in this situation.

Measuring student progress: Teachers will use video calls with students to have “check-ins” with each student. Standardized assessments used for standards-based report cards will also continue to be used. Teachers will monitor progress as they would in the classroom, however, if a teacher begins to notice a lack of participation and/or progress from the student, the teacher will wait no longer than one week and will make a phone call to the parents to determine what might be causing this situation. The teacher and parents will then put together a plan to address the particular situation.

Middle School & High School

Curriculum content access: Students will utilize the Microsoft Teams Platform. Content delivery will be available in the form of PowerPoints, videos, uploaded assignments, and virtual labs, as well as chat and video sessions with the instructor at designated times.

Student assessment and evaluation: Student attainment of Bishop Ryan Learning Standards will be evaluated and assessed using formative and summative assessments based on virtual observation and interaction with students (through on-line interactions), frequent evaluations, self-assessment, and mastery of content. Evaluation and assessment is dependent on work submitted in Microsoft Teams, in hard-copy to be submitted weekly, or in real-time distance learning evaluations. Feedback will be provided to redirect learning and improve mastery.

Measuring student progress: Student progress will be monitored through the use of both formative and summative assessments, in both virtual and real-time assessments that meet twenty-first century skills that require rigor and real-world application, based on value-added models, as well as content mastery using multiple test formats. Teachers will monitor progress as they would in the classroom, however, if a teacher begins to notice a lack of participation and/or progress from the student, the teacher will wait no longer than one week and will make a phone call to the parents to determine what might be causing this situation. The teacher and parents will then put together a plan to address the particular situation.

CTE/Science/Labs: BRCS will address the need for our students in the content area of science and Career and Technical Education (CTE) in the following manner. With the exception of Introduction to Business, all CTE course offered at BRCS are taught through other entities. The majority of our CTE courses are taught through the Central Regional Area Career and Technical Center (CRACTC), which is currently taught in an online format, and through Minot Public Schools, which is creating its own digital platform. BRCS student enrolled in those courses will continue those courses at the direction of the overseeing entity.

This school year we implemented new curricular materials for all of our science courses. These materials were purchased through McGraw Hill and comes with access to a digital textbook. There is also an abundance of digital recourse provided through ConnectED, including digital labs. Our science instructors will be able to continue providing course appropriate and specific instruction, without having to deviate from the original scope and sequence because of the provided digital recourses provided through our textbook publisher.

Special Education and 504s: We have created specific protocols to serve the needs of our students with special needs. While BRCS employed staff do not deliver Special Education case management services or direct service minutes, we are working to provide opportunities for BRCS students on an ISP or Section 504 Plan to receive the additional supports they need. BRCS will continue to provide access to our Transition Room personnel through Microsoft Teams, and are integrating pertinent Minot Public Schools Title personnel into our on-line platform for ease of communication. Minot Public School District has assured us that they will be fulfilling their obligation to these students, but has not shared with us the details of how that will happen. We remain in close contact with Minot Public Schools' special education personnel. On our part, we have individualized plans in place to provide student supports for those with special needs or section 504 plans.

We have also identified isolated places within our school building which could be used to provide one-on-one in-person services, while more easily accommodating the hygienic practices required to keep a sanitized environment. Again, any student reintegration of the school would be done only in accordance with public health guidelines and the approval of the BRCS Board of Directors.

English language learner consideration: We have no students whom require these services.

Federal Title considerations: We met with Cheryl Hagar and Kelsey Walz from Minot Public Schools today. Minot Public Schools currently has no plan in place, but they will keep us updated.

Paying Federally Funded Staff During School Closure: Not applicable.

School Counseling Services: Our school counselor has familiarized herself with the ASCA guidance and is prepared to continue providing services within their framework and ethical standards.

- Kindergarten through grade 5: Class specific lessons will continue to be provided via Teams.
- Grades 6-12: PowerPoint presentations have been created to help students with organization and managing stress and anxiety. Also, office hours are being provided wherein students may meet with the school counselor should they need additional assistance.
- Testing: AP testing will be done on-line and at-home. The pre-ACT is being moved indefinitely.

Student Nutrition and Feeding: BRCS has rolled over its USDA monies to Minot Public Schools for the purposes of providing free meals to students. In the case that students are reintegrated into the school building for instruction, our normal school lunch program will resume through the preparation and provision of brown-bagged lunches. The administration of Bishop Ryan Catholic School is confident that the above outlined plan is flexible, feasible, prudent, and the best strategy available to us for dealing with the difficult COVID-19 situation. We are ready and willing to do our part for the common good of the people we serve through both consistently continuing our educational mission and supporting the Governor's attempts to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19. We respectfully ask that you approve our plan to carry out instruction through the aforementioned strategies.