

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope this letter finds you and your family well during this challenging time. As District 214 receives new information, many changes occur, and we appreciate your patience and understanding as we navigate through the ever-evolving Coronavirus pandemic.

This past week, John Hersey High School's focus and highest priority was to check on the health and wellness of our students, families, and community. As we transition into Remote Instruction this week, we are seeking your support for this academic movement in order to best support the needs of your child.

According to *The New York Times*, students learn the most from people they care about. Studies have shown, "that the student brain activity synchronizes with the teacher's brain activity. In good times and bad, good teachers and good students co-regulate each other" (Brooks 2019). This is the time to co-regulate. Please know and understand that John Hersey High School has made every thoughtful effort in making this challenging moment educational, intentional, and purposeful for our students. With your help and support, John Hersey High School will continue to uphold the same academic rigor and standards we have always exemplified.

More than ever, we need to approach this next chapter as a united front: parents and teachers united. We do not want our students to fall behind but are also required to adhere to the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) guidelines. The ISBE has defined how schools and districts will proceed with education for the remainder of the year, and the recommendations are as follows:

- Grading should focus on the continuation of learning and prioritize the connectedness and care for students and staff.
- Our students may be experiencing varying mental and physical health challenges at this time and may have very different access to supports and technology at home. Our goal is that no student is negatively impacted by the closure and that no school district's policies or procedures should widen the equity gap.
- School districts have full autonomy to provide continuous learning opportunities through whatever means possible, including technology and free online resources.
- We encourage every school and district to explore and implement what works best for the school community.
- Student work completed during the suspension of in-person instruction must not negatively impact a student's grades or otherwise impact a student's academic standing.

www.isbe.net/covid19

These are unprecedented times, never experienced by educators; we are not sure what may or may not happen in the near future, but we do know that, at some point, school will be back in session and traditional classroom education will continue. The better students prepare now, the better served they will be in the future. Therefore, we are approaching the next few weeks' academic enrichment opportunities as instruction not only to assist students' grades but also to build on skills as we move into next year. Most students know of the ISBE's guidelines and that their grade cannot be impaired by these academic enrichment activities, which is why we are asking for your assistance. Whether your child can use these opportunities to raise their grade or if your child already has an "A" in the class, these academic enrichment activities will strengthen your child's skills-set and continue their academic growth. We also encourage our seniors to embrace the enrichment activities to further prepare them for life, career, and college readiness.

John Hersey High School will proceed with Remote Instruction by providing academic enrichment activities via Schoology/Google. Through enrichment activities, students can potentially raise their letter grade by completing these activities with quality and fidelity. If a student does not complete an enrichment activity with fidelity, points may not be fully awarded for that particular activity; however, it will not negatively impact a student's grade. Therefore, we highly encourage students to embrace the enrichment activities to the best of their ability while also considering a healthy balance between academics, self-care, and family during this trying time.

Students should be checking their email and Schoology daily starting this week for specific information from their teachers. Enrichment activities will differ from content area to content area and even teacher to teacher based on the needs of the students within that class.

We appreciate your support and understanding as we navigate through this situation together.

Sincerely,
Gordie Sisson
Principal
John Hersey High School