

Dear Hawthorn Community:

To begin, I would like to thank you for your cooperation, flexibility, and patience as we navigate these challenging days together. As a husband and father of three children, I understand first hand the challenges school closures present to families, staff, and students. In the face of these challenging times, everyone has gone the extra mile without hesitation. I am very proud to be a member of the Hawthorn District 73 community.

Last night, we received new guidelines from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) on how we can move forward with newly defined “Remote Learning Days,” and it is clear that due to the hard work and preparation of our faculty and staff we are in a very good position to resume at home learning beginning on Monday, March 30.

While the governor has targeted April 7 as the end of mandatory school closures, we are moving forward with our planning assuming that the closure will last longer. If we are lucky enough to be able to come back to school sooner, we can easily adjust our plans from that point forward.

On Sunday, March 29, our Teaching and Learning Team will send communication to welcome our District families back to home learning. Please continue to access our home learning webpage, which provides relevant and creative learning activities that encourage your child to create, connect, and explore. Our immediate goal is for students to participate in learning that brings them joy and helps support their skill development.

Over the coming weeks, we will implement plans that serve to enhance our students’ home learning experience. Specifically, we are preparing to deploy devices to students in grades pre-k through 5 who do not have consistent access to a device at home. We are prioritizing families without a device other than a smartphone, families in which parents/guardians and school-aged children share one device, and then families in which multiple school-aged children share one device. This will better allow us to provide a more interactive, comprehensive, and formalized Remote Learning experience for all.

Please know that we understand the current reality of our families. Many of our District’s parents and guardians are working from home while also supervising young children, some are experiencing financial hardship due to the stay at home order, and we are all working to protect our children’s physical safety and emotional well-being. Simply stated, with respect to Remote Learning for our students, please just do the best you can under the circumstances. Once students return to school, we will implement plans to ensure all students receive any needed academic support to ensure their continued success.

Our meal program will resume on Monday, March 30. The meals are free and available to any child age 18 and under who lives in our community. The district's pick-up station is at Middle School South, 600 Aspen Drive, Vernon Hill, IL 60061. Pick up times are from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. for families with last names beginning with A-L, and from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. for families with last names beginning with M-Z.

I wish you and your family a great week ahead as students return to school as remote learners. These past weeks have been challenging, and I applaud each and every one of you for your amazing work and commitment to this District.

Sincerely,

Peter Hannigan, Ed.D
Superintendent