

## Bluejay Strong – January 11, 2024

Good afternoon, students and parents.

This morning was Ahmir Johliff's funeral, where many of us gathered together in mourning and to show support for the Johliff family. It has been a difficult day, and I know we will feel the impact this tragedy has had on our school and community for quite some time. Through the grief, however, I continue to be touched by – and thankful for – the outpouring of support our schools and community have received from across the state, and beyond. It is comforting to know that people care and want to help.

As we move forward on our healing journey, I encourage you to continue leaning on one another and tapping into the support resources available to both students and parents.

The purpose of this message is to provide timely updates on a variety of important topics. If you have additional questions, please send them to [Bluejaystrong@g.perry.k12.ia.us](mailto:Bluejaystrong@g.perry.k12.ia.us).

Please remember, even though we are currently not in school, there are different activities and services that might be affected by winter weather. Consult the usual channels – School Messenger, the school website, local TV and radio stations, and the school Facebook pages – for updates and announcements.

### News for Today – Thursday, January 11, 2024

#### Return to School

*Reminder:* There is no school for ALL students this week.

**Parent Concerns** – The administrative team is actively discussing the enhanced safety and security measures for our return to school. We will share that information as soon as possible.

The district's return to the classroom plan is as follows:

#### ELEMENTARY

- **Wednesday, January 17:** An Open House for elementary parents and students will take place from 2 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Counseling services will be available onsite.
- **Thursday, January 18:** Elementary students will return to the classroom and will have early dismissal at 2:00 p.m., which will continue until all three buildings are ready for a full day.

#### MIDDLE SCHOOL

- **Thursday, January 18:** An Open House for parents and students will take place from 2 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Counseling services will be available onsite.
- **Friday, January 19:** Middle School students will return to the classroom with an early dismissal at 1:45 p.m. that day, and early dismissal will continue until all three buildings are ready for a full day.

#### HIGH SCHOOL

- **The plans for the return of High School students are still being discussed. More information will be shared when it becomes available.**

#### Other Announcements

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** We wanted to provide some rationale on the decisions made about activities.

- First and foremost, the health and wellness of our students is the top priority; and, based on feedback we have received, some students, coaches and sponsors are not yet ready to compete in any type of setting.
- Administration understands the concerns of students and parents. However, a priority is being placed on making sure everything is in-place for getting students, faculty and staff back into our schools for learning. We want this to be a week of healing and honoring those impacted.
- After careful review of the situation, District leaders decided to postpone participation in competitions for all middle school and high school students until at least January 16th.
- A priority has been placed on reconnecting coaches and sponsors with their student participants, so practices or meetings are occurring this week, but at the discretion of the coach or sponsor.
- Operationally, the high school facilities cannot be used at this time, so rescheduling everything on short notice is not realistic. Getting our students to and from competitions was also taken into consideration and was part of our decision-making process.
- We are making sure we stay in contact with the IHSAA, IGHSAU, IHSMA and the IHSSA to ensure our students and programs are taken care of when it comes to providing some flexibility and support as we return to competition.
- The administration is thankful for the outpouring of support and offers to help. Unfortunately, given all the reasons outlined above, we have not been able to act on these offers to assist.
- *Reminder:* ALL extracurricular competitions are postponed until January 16<sup>th</sup>. Contact coaches and sponsors with questions regarding practices.

**PACES** – This before and after school learning center will start back up on Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Project Recovery Iowa** – Due to pending weather, these services will be VIRTUAL ONLY on Friday, January 12<sup>th</sup>. Visit [Project Recovery Iowa](#) – to sign up for a time for a virtual conversation, phone or chat and indicate the time that works for you. Call 1-800-447-1985 for more information.

## Resources

**COMFORT DOGS:** The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs team – Eden, Gideon, Katie, Phineas, Charity and Joanna, and their human handlers – are available by appointment. They will also be at the McCreary Community Building daily from approximately 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. – 3 p.m., as well as other locations around the community. Watch here for updates; or you can email [coordinator@k9comfort.org](mailto:coordinator@k9comfort.org) or call or text 847-287-6612 to schedule a visit.

**CHILDCARE:** Childcare is available at the McCreary Community Building free of charge for school age children from 6 a.m. – 6 p.m. There are also disaster relief resource coordinators there for families who have questions.

- Meals, snacks and activities will be provided at no cost; and parents will need to escort children into the McCreary Community Building, and sign them in. Also, if the pick-up guardian will be different from those who drop off, please make sure to include contact information (email and phone number).
- For more information please contact: McCreary Community Building at 515-465-5621

**LUNCHES:** Grab & Go Lunches are available each day until further notice at the elementary school from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Any changes due to winter weather will be posted on the school's website, School Messenger, KCCI and the school's social media pages.

## COUNSELING

- Heart of Iowa Community Services ([www.hicsiowa.org](http://www.hicsiowa.org)) can connect students needing counseling to long-term mental health support and care coordination services. Financial assistance is available for those without insurance or with limited insurance coverage. Contact Brandon Tews at

[brandon.tews@dallascountyiowa.gov](mailto:brandon.tews@dallascountyiowa.gov) or 515-993-1722. We will also post support resources on the school Facebook pages.

- Easter Seals will provide virtual counseling on Friday, January 12 through a confidential Zoom room.
  - Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6388777999>
  - Meeting ID: 638 877 7999
  - One tap mobile (access from your phone in one touch) +16469313860,,6388777999# US
  - Dial in: 646-931-3860 meeting id 638 877 7999
- On **January 17<sup>th</sup>, from 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.**, staff and families from Perry can join a secure Zoom meeting led by a psychologist. This month's topic is *working through grief and loss*. This interactive webinar is available in both English and Spanish. To participate, pre-register using the link for your preferred language.  
English: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_qWjtEYSQTIS1yScbWm6fPQ#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qWjtEYSQTIS1yScbWm6fPQ#/registration)  
Spanish: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_-3FhbxfETZ6M-PGJPm7rQw#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-3FhbxfETZ6M-PGJPm7rQw#/registration)

#### **Happening Tomorrow – January 12, 2024**

- *Reminder:* Entertainment Opportunity: The Perry Grand Theater, with support from the Optimist Club of Perry and RE/MAX Concepts Cares, is offering free admission, pop and popcorn to support the community on Friday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

#### **Donations Reminder**

Perry Community School District has set up accounts at Raccoon Valley Bank in the wake of last Thursday's incident.

- There are two distinct accounts: one for the Ahmir Jolliff Family and the other for the Victims/Staff/Students of Perry Community School.
- Anyone wanting to make a donation by check or cash can stop by any of the Raccoon Valley Bank locations in Perry, Adel, Dallas Center or Grimes. All checks should be made out to the "Perry Community School District" with the account distinction/preference written in the memo line.
- Donations can be accepted online here:
  - Bluejay Strong - [www.schoolpay.com/pay/for/Bluejay-Strong-/Sbql8AQ](http://www.schoolpay.com/pay/for/Bluejay-Strong-/Sbql8AQ)
  - Ahmir Jolliff Family - [www.schoolpay.com/pay/for/Ahmir-Jolliff-Family/SdUyyS9](http://www.schoolpay.com/pay/for/Ahmir-Jolliff-Family/SdUyyS9)
- Donations can also be mailed to the Raccoon Valley Bank at PO Box 129, Perry, Iowa 50220. Perry Community Schools will distribute 100% of the donations collected to those impacted.