

Resolution – Pandemic Response and Emergency Suspension of Policy

WHEREAS, Iowa Code Ch. 279.8 authorizes local school boards to govern their respective districts, including adopting policies for their own governance; and

WHEREAS the Board may, by formal, action suspend or rescind board policy as deemed necessary, appropriate or in the best interests of the District; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national state of emergency and on March 15, 2020 Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds recommended closure of all public and private K-12 schools in Iowa until April 13, 2020 to contain the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds declared a State of Public Health Disaster Emergency under the authority granted through Iowa Constitution, Art. IV, §§ 1, 8 and Iowa Code §§ 29C.6(1), 135.140(6), and 135.144 and directed implementation of the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management's Iowa Emergency Response Plan in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19); and

WHEREAS, most hourly non-exempt employees will be unable to report to work due to the District's closure and certified contract employees may be asked to work at remote locations to help provide continuity in educational services; and

WHEREAS, it fulfills a public purpose to continue to pay District hourly and classified non-exempt employees during this closure to prevent or contain the spread of COVID-19, to promote morale and to help retain current employees following the closure; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020 the Iowa Legislature passed and the Governor signed SF 2408 granting waiver of the instructional time requirements in Iowa Code Ch. 279.10 for all public school districts closing before April 12, 2020 in order to prevent or contain the spread of COVID-19; and granting Governor Reynolds the ability to waive instructional time requirements for any public school district which closes on or after April 12, 2020 to prevent or contain the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Iowa Department of Education, which has the authority to establish and interpret graduation requirements, and to oversee other crucial aspects of public education is providing written guidance to Iowa school districts on issues related to COVID -19, including but not limited to student attendance, distance/online learning, high school credit, meal distribution, and other issues; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the New Hampton Community School Board hereby suspends provisions of its board policies and/or whole policies, as identified by the District Superintendent or designee, if such suspension is necessary to implement written guidance from state or federal agencies relating to containing COVID-19 for the duration identified in the Governor's State of Public Health Emergency declaration of March 17, 2020, or as otherwise determined by the Board.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the District Superintendent will consult with and report to the Board as feasible and appropriate regarding the emergency closure and efforts to implement written guidance from health and government agencies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the District Superintendent is authorized to close any school facility without further action by the Board of Directors. Such closure shall continue during the emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic until such time as the Superintendent, in consultation with appropriate health and government authorities, deems it in the best interests of the District and its students to open schools.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the District Superintendent is authorized, based upon the needs of the District and guidance from health and government agencies, to direct staff assignments during District closures, including but not limited to essential employees who must report to work, employees who may be reassigned, and employees whose services are not needed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that access to public school grounds and public school buildings of the District may be limited as directed by the Superintendent during District closures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified, exempt employees will remain employed during the school closure and until the number of days expressed on the contract have been fulfilled, unless otherwise approved by the Board. Days that contracted employees do not report for duty either onsite if deemed an essential employee; or from a remote location for all other employees due to closure, do not constitute a fulfilled contract day except to the extent those days are forgiven by the District.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in light of this District-wide emergency closure, the Board authorizes the Superintendent to place hourly and classified non-exempt employees on paid administrative leave **and/or discretionary on-call duties as needed** and to continue to pay them for up to four weeks during the period of school closure, and the Board shall reevaluate this authority for any school closure lasting longer than four weeks.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in the interest of public health and/or to comply with federal or state health department recommendations or guidance, the Board may limit the number of people who can physically attend Board meetings and may, instead, encourage the public to attend or listen to its open public meetings via telephone or live streaming on the internet and the Board may also limit public comment to written comments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the board reserves the right to adjust board meeting dates, times, and locations during the district-wide emergency closure in a manner consistent with the Open Meetings law, and notes that any or all board members may attend board meetings electronically as permitted by law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that execution of this Resolution is conclusive evidence of the Board's approval of this action and of the authority granted herein. The Board warrants that it has, and at the time of this action had, full power and lawful authority to adopt this instrument. This resolution will remain in full force and effect until it is rescinded or amended by subsequent action of the Board.

Adopted and approved this _____ day of _____.

By: _____
Board President or Designee

Attest: _____
Board Secretary