

Dear Ballard families and staff,

Last Thursday, the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) released guidance for the additional closure period of April 13th to April 30th. As you can see in the attached guidance, districts have three choices.

### [Procedures for Continuous Learning](#)

**No Continuous Learning** - the district provides nothing to students during closure and makes up the hours in the summer (assuming we are permitted to return to school).

**Voluntary Educational Enrichment Opportunities** - This may include paper packets, teleconferencing, online instruction or other outreach activities. Student participation is voluntary, and no grading or credit is given. Enrichment opportunities require more than posting lists of activities students and families can do if they want to - schools need to engage with learners.

**Required Educational Services** - Continuous learning through the provision of approved educational services ensures that academic work is equivalent in effort and rigor to typical classroom work. All students are required to participate, attendance is taken, work is graded, and credit granted.

Typically, instruction is provided through some type of online learning. Hybrid models of learning involving some online learning and other methodologies like paper packets are also available. These services must be approved by the Iowa Department of Education. The Department advises schools to take a flexible and lenient approach to attendance and truancy at this time.

This week, Ballard will notify the IDOE of the intention to proceed with Voluntary Educational Enrichment Opportunities (VEEO) beginning April 13th through April 30th.

VEEO is the best fit for Ballard during the closure period for these primary reasons.

1. This option provides educational opportunities to continue for our students.
2. Through collaboration and professional development, staff can build their capacity to provide quality distance learning opportunities in a way that is appropriate for students, families and teachers.
3. We are simply not prepared at this time to ensure that "academic work is equivalent in effort and rigor to classroom work" in a distance learning environment.

The high school presents circumstances unique to other buildings. Local districts have always maintained the authority to determine graduation requirements, issue credit and set grading policies. The IDOE has committed to continuing the practice and signaled districts should be as flexible as possible to ensure seniors are able to graduate as planned. A follow-up email will be sent to high school families this week to address the issuing of graduation, credit, and grading.

Please let us know if you have questions. Best wishes for a safe and healthy week. Take care, everyone!

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