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March 22, 2024



## Mount Pleasant Area School District

To All Mount Pleasant Area Parents & Guardians,

This correspondence is to inform you of an important decision regarding our school schedule. The district will implement an early student dismissal on **April 8, 2024** due to the inherent safety concerns related to the solar eclipse that will take place that afternoon. The peak of the eclipse would occur during the midst of our elementary dismissal times.

The safety and well-being of our students is always our utmost priority. We have been consulting with several advisors over the past week to determine our best course of action. The following considerations all came to the forefront in recent discussions regarding how to best handle the event.

- The solar eclipse presents a significant risk of retina damage if viewed without proper eye protection. The sun remains strong even though there may be less light. Staring at the eclipse for just a few seconds can potentially lead to significant retina damage. Even with guidance and education on safe viewing practices, the possibility of students inadvertently looking directly at the eclipse during student dismissal and while on the bus poses a real concern for many.
- The timing of the eclipse coinciding with student dismissal also raises concerns about distracted driving. It has been recommended to stay off of the roads during the eclipse if at all possible. Bus drivers, student drivers as well as other motorists may be compromised by either the temptation to glance or desire to avoid taking a glance at the eclipse. Any such distraction increases the risk of accidents and poses a threat to the safety of both drivers and pedestrians.
- There is also an educational experience that can be memorable and enriching for parents and students alike. We encourage our families to safely take the opportunity to enjoy this rare event together with their children if possible.

There has been quite a bit of research, thought and discussion put into this decision. We apologize for the inconvenience of the schedule change but believe it is most prudent to take this particular action. There will be an additional correspondence upcoming that will update the schedule for the week of April 8th. Thank you for your continued partnership, understanding and cooperation. Together we can ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone during the solar eclipse.

Respectfully,

A blue ink signature of Dr. Timothy M. Gabauer.

Dr. Timothy M. Gabauer  
Superintendent of Schools

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