



Manistee Area PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Superintendent: Ronald J. Stoneman
Business Manager: Howard J. Vaas

Thursday, April 2, 2020

Dear MAPS Families;

Today we received Governor Whitmer's Executive Order confirming that school buildings are to remain closed through the remainder of the school year. Although, we understand that this order creates concerns for our students, families, and staff we remain committed to providing meaningful support for all as we navigate the challenges before us.

The following is a summary of the impact points of the Executive Order:

- **Student Learning Support.** Once our Continuity of Learning plan has been approved, we will be providing materials and resources for remote learning for all students through the remainder of the school year. We have been working with state and local educational organizations to identify pathways for providing instruction supportive of continued learning and skills retention through both online and offline resources. We are aiming for distance learning to begin on a target date of April 13th but not later than April 28, 2020.
- **Events & Activities.** All sports and extracurricular events and activities are cancelled through the end of the school year. This includes a ban on the use of ALL district facilities including all indoor and outdoor amenities for recreational purposes.
- **Graduation.** We expect that all high school seniors that were on pace to graduate by state and district requirements before the state-mandated shutdown will graduate. We will continue to communicate as we learn more regarding state directives for graduation and supports. Although we currently do not have the ability to make plans, we intend to provide the graduating class of 2020 with a graduation experience once we are able to do so.
- **Grade Advancements.** Students in grades kindergarten through 11th grade will advance to their next grade at the beginning of the next school year, as long as it is determined that they were on pace to advance based upon district and state requirements before the required closure. We will continue to communicate as we learn more regarding state directives for advancement and supports.
- **Make-Up Days.** The days and hours requirement for instruction have been changed, the instructional time lost during the required closure will be forgiven, and the 75% attendance requirement will be waived. Our last day of the school year is planned for June 5th barring unforeseen circumstances.
- **Back to School.** The district has received a waiver allowing for a pre-Labor Day start to the 2020/21 school year. The first day of school is planned for Tuesday, September 1st, with a 4-day weekend planned in observance of Labor Day.
- **School Funding.** Schools will receive their full state funding based on enrollment through the end of the school budget year, which runs through June 30, allowing for the continuation of programs supportive of student needs.

- **School Employees.** School employees, including teachers, will be paid through the end of the school year. They will continue to be an integral part of the support efforts for our students as we rise to the challenges before us.
- **Family Support.** Under the order students and families will not be penalized for an inability to participate in the continuity of learning plan although every effort will be made to provide materials and support for them to do so.
- **3rd Grader Reading.** Michigan's third grade reading law, which recommends third graders who are more than a year behind in reading be retained in third grade, will not be enforced this year.
- **Student Testing.** State student assessment requirements have been waived for this school year.
- **SAT Testing.** Students will be given an opportunity in the fall to take the SAT and PSAT to make up for the state-funded college entrance exam they would have taken in March.
- **AP Testing.** College Board will be making an at-home testing option available for the students eligible for Advanced Placement testing. Information regarding the testing schedule and resources for those not able to administer online testing at home will be made available as information is provided to the district.

Now that we have some parameters available from the State, we can begin implementing next level plans for continuing support. Although though some things will change, our goals to ensure the well-being of our students remain the same. The district will provide:

- Nutritional support during the length of the closure through our Food Services program administered weekdays from 11:00 a.m. until noon at MMHS.
- Resources to provide mental health supports for students and families as they navigate the stressors of this challenging time.
- Guidelines to support all students for a continuation of learning and skills retention until we are able to restore our traditional learning environments.

Dr. Michael Rice, State Superintendent reminded school leaders to take care of the social-emotional needs of our students during this unprecedented time. *"In a difficult time, kindness, caring, and compassion are even more important than usual. This is particularly true during the COVID-19 pandemic, when our students need the love, support, structure, and stability that we in schools—teachers, support staff members, and administrators--provide on a daily basis."*

You have our commitment to stay focused on providing stability for all MAPS students. Working together we will build a foundation for our students to thrive. More information regarding resources and support will be available in the coming days.

Stay safe and stay well.

Sincerely,

Ron Stoneman, Superintendent
Manistee Area Public Schools