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DR. KANDACE BETHEA
Superintendent

Marion County School District
Superintendent's COVID-19/School Closure Update
TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2020

Note of Thanks:

A special thank you to our dedicated staff for the hard work and energy that they have put in to making this a smooth transition, our amazing students for their swift adjustment to a remote learning platform, our committed parents for supporting the learning process, our supportive Board for their leadership, and our community stakeholders for the endless acts of kindness, thoughts and well wishes for the district and our families. We are truly grateful and appreciate each of you!

Closure Update:

Per Governor McMaster's new executive order, the Marion County School District (MCS D), will be physically closed for the rest of the academic year. Though our doors are closed, school is still in session and our staff will continue to work utilizing a remote learning platform. All staff members are available virtually to assist our students and families.

Seniors/Graduation:

The Graduating Class of 2020 has been confronted with a scenario that none of us could have ever imagined as a way to culminate their senior year of high school. As I have assured all seniors in a letter emailed to each of them, we are working closely with our high school principals to find creative ways to celebrate graduations. Tentatively, the district is exploring options for graduations to take place using an outdoor format. A Graduation Taskforce has been put in place and they are in the process of finalizing official graduation guidelines. Once available, official graduation information will be announced to seniors and their parents and/or guardians. Due to health and safety guidelines, there will be extremely strict requirements placed on graduation ceremonies with a very limited number of guests that will be able to attend.

The State Superintendent of Education has issued a May 15, 2020, statewide deadline for seniors to have all coursework completed for graduation. I encourage all seniors to stay engaged in their academics to finish the year strong! We, MCS D, are committed to doing all that we can to help them get to the finish line!

End of Year Instructional Plan

Our faculty and staff have done a great job of adjusting to the modified teaching and learning models. Over the next week, additional information will be released in regards to the third learning cycle and end of year deadlines and expectations for students.

We continue to ask parents to commit to adhering to the expectations of the Learning Packet. We recognize that this is a huge undertaking and will require tremendous effort from all. However, the district, working closely with parents, will make this unique situation the best possible experience for our students. If you have any questions or concerns pertaining to an individual circumstance, we ask that you communicate that to your child's teacher/school. For students needing additional time for work completion, there will be two Flex Weeks, which will be a time to catch up and no new work will be assigned during this time. This information will be provided to parents.

Student Feeding Program

It is our goal to ensure that our students continue to receive the proper nutrition during the extended school closure and we intend to operate the feeding program through May. Any changes that occur in the feeding program will be communicated to families through social media.

As a side note, we are thankful to the Food Lion Corporation for donating a total of 900 - \$20.00 gift cards and reusable grocery bags to our Marion County School District families! What an amazing act of generosity.

Physical and Emotional Health

We care about the overall well-being of our students and families and encourage each of you to make your mental health a top priority. Safeguarding your mental/emotional health is equally as vital as safeguarding your physical health. Parents, if you feel that your child needs help, you (or your child) are welcome to contact the school's counselor. Counselors are monitoring their emails while working from home and will respond quickly. Please do not hesitate to use this resource.

General Updates

As we continue to navigate through the resolution of the COVID-19 public health crisis, we realize that its impact will have long term consequences, which may permanently affect the way that we do business in schools. Please know that MCSD will continue to operate with students' best interest as our top priority.

Lastly, please remember to check the district's go to page for all updated COVID-19 information. Find messages from administration, resources, advice and more. We hope this will help answer any questions you may have. Visit the district's website at: www.marion.k12.sc.us

Please stay safe and continue to adhere to the local, state and federal health and safety guidelines.