

Dear Manchester Public Schools Community,

I am writing to share updated information regarding the rapidly changing effects of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. While Governor Lamont has issued a statewide directive that all Connecticut schools be closed until at least March 31, we believe that the closure of schools will continue well beyond that date.

As a result, a team of teachers, administrators and other district staff is preparing to expand and formalize interim learning opportunities for all students. This expanded educational programming will include a combination of hard copy assignments, online experiences, and telephone check-ins with teachers and school staff.

Starting tomorrow, teachers and other staff will be calling the parents and guardians of every student, to check in and also collect information from families on internet and device accessibility as well as other potential needs. This work will continue into next week, with a full launch of our formalized interim learning experience no later than Monday, March 30. Instruction, assignments and support will continue through April vacation, which had been scheduled for April 13-17, and we anticipate that the academic year will end on June 15, as had been originally scheduled.

As we prepare for the March 30 launch of the formal interim learning experience, the daily OneManchester newsletter will include additional resources and information for students designed to further supplement materials and directions they brought home from school last Friday.

The district is deeply committed to ensuring equitable experiences for all students and understands that the needs of students and families, particularly in this kind of circumstance, vary widely. Part of our planning involves distribution of necessary resources to all parents and families. We know that many parents are still working either on site or from home so the educational programming will be flexible in nature. Educating our children has always been a partnership between school staff and families and that partnership is perhaps more important than ever before as we work together to ensure continuity of learning for kids during this most challenging and uncertain time.

Circumstances are changing continually and we are still working out several details so please continue to check your email for updates on our plan for learning. Additionally, if you have suggestions on what you feel would be helpful as you embark on this journey with us, please send an email to b11jfarr@mpspride.org.

Also a reminder: we continue to offer students free 'grab-and-go' breakfast (8-10 a.m.) and lunch (11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.) Monday through Friday at the following locations.

- Bennet Academy - School Street entrance
- Manchester Middle Academy (the former Robertson School building) - Main entrance
- Waddell Elementary School - Broad Street side door entrance along cafeteria
- Squire Village - Meals available in community room

MACC Charities has a Community Kitchen (466 Main Street) that provides bagged lunches (1 bag per person) from 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. No one is allowed in the dining room to eat.

I expect to have more updates in the coming days.

In the meantime, I hope you and your family are healthy and well.

Sincerely, Matt Geary - Superintendent of Schools