



NEWLOTHROP AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 20, 2020

Good Afternoon Students, Parents, Staff, & Community Members:

I communicated with our district staff mid-week with a similar message, which is relevant with this group as well. First, we hope all of you and your families are in good health. Second, there is an abundant amount of information and unknowns about the Coronavirus and how it is/will impact our daily lives now and into the foreseeable future that is why I want to communicate facts, not rumors or editorials. Third, I am being strategic in my communication to the students, staff, & community so as not to inundate or be repetitive.

Below is the current information I believe that the district community should be informed of:

- **For your information:** Per the Governor's executive order, we continue to be on a 3-week shutdown, with the projected student start date of Monday, April 6th. There are numerous rumors floating out there (i.e. extending the shutdown, canceling remainder of the school year, etc.) however, this is what we know as of today. We are still waiting to hear from the legislature on whether or not these days will be forgiven. Once we have further information we will communicate it out with our district community.
- **For your information:** To reiterate, we are collaborating with districts in our county and neighboring districts outside of our county to supply lunches to our students. I communicated this information on Monday night. Additionally, our district will be providing meals for anyone 18 and under starting March 23rd - March 27th: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:45-11:30 a.m. in the bus parking lot. Val Baker, our Food Service Director will be heading this initiative.
- **For your information:** As of today, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced students impacted by school closures due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic can bypass standardized testing for the 2019-2020 school year. Upon a proper request, the Department will grant a waiver to any state that is unable to assess its students due to the ongoing national emergency, providing relief from federally mandated testing requirements for this school year. Earlier in the week, Michigan's President of the State Board of Education and State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice had urged the U.S. Secretary of Education to grant a nationwide waiver for statewide student assessments.
- **For your information:** All events, including spring athletic practices/games, extra-curricular activities have been suspended during this 3-week period. We have limited the buildings to essential personnel. Students are not permitted to be in buildings during this time period. We will have further information on athletics and upcoming events once we have more guidance from the health department regarding the safety and well-being of our students, staff, parents, and community.

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- **For your information:** The custodial staff is hard at work doing a deep clean of both of our buildings. Also, we have started work on our bond projects at the high school redoing our ceilings and lighting in several of our classrooms.
- **For your information:** The SRESA created a listing of free educational resources, by grade band, on the MiSTEM/Education page of the SRESA website: <https://www.sresd.org/District/Department/15-MiSTEM-Network/Portal/education>
- **For your information:** Please remember, all resources that we provided to our students are voluntary at this time and will not be required to be turned in or graded. Furthermore, as of today the Michigan Department of Education will not count online learning as instructional time.

I am proud to be a part of such a supportive district and community. Please follow the CDC guidelines and keep you and your families safe and healthy! I will communicate further when we have more information to provide at the appropriate time.

Sincerely,

Anthony Berthiaume, Ph.D.
Superintendent

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