

Superintendent Communiqué



Midland Public Schools
Inspiring Excellence

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MPS INCLUSION & DIVERSITY VISION STATEMENT

Everyone in our school community is valued, safe, treated with kindness and respect, and works together to make our community and world a better place.

SPECIAL EDITION COMMUNIQUE

April 3, 2020

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) — ** MIDLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS UPDATE **

MPS Continuity of Learning Plan

As most, if not all, of you are aware, Governor Whitmer issued an Executive Order this week that all school buildings throughout Michigan will remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic school year. In her Executive Order she clearly stated all schools will provide continuous learning to all students. MPS is committed to carrying out the intent of her executive order in providing continuous learning for all students while they are safe in their homes during this pandemic.

MPS is required to provide a Continuity of Learning Plan to the Michigan Department of Education. We started this plan in anticipation of the Governor's order. We will have the final draft of this Continuity of Learning Plan ready for all staff early next week, approved by the MPS Board of Education and released to the community by April 11. We plan to start our delivery of continuous learning on Monday April 13. It will be imperative for all parents to read this plan when released. It has pages of details that are vital, especially now more than ever, given that you are our partner and/or co-teacher in educating your child.

Since the March 16 closure, MPS has provided what we termed a Connection to Learning plan. However, we will now transition, as guidance from the Governor and MDE has mandated, to a Continuity of Learning Plan. The basic concept of this plan will be to provide as close as possible the instruction and learning that would be occurring in our school classrooms through an online learning environment. We know this cannot replicate the instruction and learning that occurs in MPS classrooms, but we will do all we can to make it similar.

Brief Description of MPS Continuity of Learning Plan

Beginning with the mandated school closure on March 16, 2020, MPS staff worked intently to stay connected with students to ensure students and family needs were met and provide enrichment activities (Connections to Learning) through digital platforms.

The clear focus during this time was keeping connected and tending to student wellbeing socially, emotionally, and physically. We are truly proud of how our staff met this challenge and put students first.

As we move into the extended school closure period, this same student-centered focus will continue both with the care we express for student wellbeing and for a more intentional approach to academic learning. That strong focus will continue moving forward during our school closure period with an additional focus on academic learning in accordance with the Executive Order issued by Governor Whitmer on April 2, 2020.

MPS staff will begin implementing the MPS Continuity of Learning Plan on April 13, 2020. The Executive Order states that public schools must provide academically-focused remote learning experiences for all students that are appropriate, equitable and accessible for students and families. MPS is committed to maintaining our level of excellence by providing these learning experiences in the most meaningful, engaging and inspiring way possible to maximize student learning and growth, while still maintaining a deep and consistent focus on student mental health and overall wellbeing.

The Continuity of Learning Plan provides an overarching framework and expectations for our staff, students, and families.

The key outcomes of this plan are:

- Emphasize care and wellbeing to all students, families, and staff
- Ensure continuity of essential learning through the end of the school year
- Provide consistent, meaningful, engaging, high-quality experiences that promote learning and growth
- Provide the most equitable and accessible learning experiences possible for all students

Don't stop reading ... lots more MPS COVID-19 mandated closure updates on Page 2 ↓



MPS CONNECT is a great communications tool for you to connect with me. Every message comes to my desktop. Either I or a member of our staff will do all we can to reply to your message the next work day. Click here to connect with me: <https://goo.gl/forms/ciB8b7FAMXb4pQxN2>

MPS staff will collaborate closely the week of April 6 to prepare for implementation of the plan on April 13. This will be an “all hands on deck” week while staff ensure structures are in place to meet the needs of all students. Teams of teachers will develop common learning experiences. Principals will organize their school teams to maintain their student-centered approach. Support staff will plan specific ways to meet the needs of all students. Attention will be given to ensuring the most equitable experience.

Students who do not yet have adequate digital access will be provided with district purchased digital hotspots and/or a comparable experience in an offline format and those logistics will be mapped. We are asking that all MPS families complete the short Student/Family Remote Learning Readiness Survey below to let us know their level of remote connectivity at your home.

Rest assured that MPS will be well-prepared to provide exceptional learning experiences with the care our District is known for in our community and throughout the state. The plan will be finalized early in the week with the spirit of continuous improvement. It is our plan to gather feedback and make necessary adjustments.

- ➔ Each grade band will have a defined schedule to increase consistency of the experience for students and families.
- ➔ There will be minimum and maximum time expectations for students to engage in academic learning each day as a way to balance academics and wellbeing.
- ➔ Counselors and other support staff will be focused on meeting student needs
- ➔ Special Education staff are putting the final touches on a plan to meet the needs of students receiving services with a “good faith effort.”
- ➔ There will be a high expectation of two-way communication with families and school staff to ensure students are engaged in the learning.

MPS Student/Family Remote Learning Readiness Survey

It is important that every family respond to this short survey about your home’s on-line connectivity so that MPS personnel can determine how to proceed in the coming weeks in order to best support your child(ren). This survey only needs to be done one time per family (unless shared custody arrangements would result in different responses). Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Here is the link: <https://forms.gle/bvLKCUPfbxxrqfJc6>

Food Service

As of today we have prepared and delivered over 58,000 meals to our community. MPS will be providing these meals in the same format through the end of the academic year, and we are exploring options to continue serving through the summer months.

Employees

As you may have read, the Governor’s Executive Order yesterday had the requirement that all school employees be paid during the shutdown and that meaningful work be found if possible. MPS is committed to paying employees and providing meaningful work during this shutdown period. Presently, staff is being paid and we are exploring meaningful work options while keeping everyone healthy and safe. Work may be assigned to be done at home, and if we need to bring employees in we have generated health screening protocols and social distancing strategies. In addition, we have increased protocols on disinfecting and record keeping. (The Michigan Constitution requires work if paid.)

Information That We Know on Other Concerns

Will the high schools have prom this spring?

Sadly it does not look possible at this time. We expect our high school principals will make a formal announcement next week.

Athletics

Today, the Michigan High School Athletic Association Issued a statement cancelling winter sports postseason and all spring sports. MPS is presently working to refund spring sports participation fees. We expect our Athletic Directors to issue a statement next week on this process. Here is the link to the MHSAA media release we received today: <http://www.midlandps.org/mhssa-letter>

Class of 2020 Commencement Ceremony

MPS is formally delaying our Class of 2020 Commencement date. We still plan to recognize the Class of 2020 for their many accomplishments. We believe delaying the ceremony date will allow us to make the best possible decision for hosting a recognition and keep all students, faculty and family members safe. We have been studying several options and will be watching what universities are doing in their graduation ceremonies. If you are a 2020 graduating senior and/or a family member/friend of a 2020 graduating senior and plan to attend, please participate in this brief survey on graduation: <https://forms.gle/w7GTgULq9cVUir9f7>

Student Personal Items Located In the School

Our principals are developing formal plans to have student personal items returned to students and/or parents. It is our plan to wait until the Stay Safe, Stay Home Order is lifted before allowing this to occur. If a student has an item they need immediately and cannot wait, we are asking parents to email their Principal. The Principal will retrieve the item for you and have a curbside pickup process. When we do bring students in to retrieve items after the Stay Home order is lifted, we will require a temperature scan, and we will allow only a few students at a time as scheduled. Stay tuned for a communication from your Principal in the near future with additional details.

School Playgrounds/Athletic Fields

During the Stay Safe, Stay Home Order, all Midland Public Schools playgrounds and athletic fields are closed for the health and wellbeing of all as we all work together to stop the spread of COVID-19.

If you have questions or need assistance, please reach out via MPS Connect: <https://goo.gl/forms/ciB8b7FAMXb4pQxN2>

Be well, Michael E. Sharrow, Superintendent