

Friday, March 20, 2020

Dear BPS families,

This week our online learning content was made available for all students to access. Our thanks belong with the teacher volunteers, principals, Teaching and Learning administrators and the Technology Services staff for their incredible work to deliver meaningful learning opportunities for all learners! We hope that our students are settling into their new learning environments and falling into [routines like this one](#), sent out to all elementary families on Wednesday. Know that we've also created a website with [additional resources for families](#), including social emotional supports and self-led academic enrichment. Information on our online learning opportunities can be found on our [Teaching and Learning](#) page. Parents and students can expect regular contact from their teachers during this extended closure.

Thank you for your patience as we worked to transition learning to an online platform in the days following the sudden closure of schools across our state. We know that there are still unanswered questions around assessments and other long-term and short-term implications to a school closure of this magnitude.

Our approach to provide online supplemental resources was based on a three-week closure with a return to school after spring break. We have received no guidance that this will change. It very well could be the case that we eventually move to a required, online format for education as the potential of a longer-term closure becomes more imminent. We continue to monitor the Governor's decisions and announcements from the county level, including memos like [this one that have been slowly released by the Michigan Department of Education in the last few days](#). These documents are available to the public at www.michigan.gov/mde. Should this evolving situation demand more changes, you have my commitment that we will do so with all due haste. We are working around the clock to keep up with the latest developments, respond accordingly, and make decisions in support of our students and their families.

We are entertaining many questions regarding how the system will protect its students from academic harm. Graduation, learning, and development are all subjects on our minds. The actions I take as Superintendent of BPS will continue to reflect my ardent belief that students should be protected, not harmed, as a result of this crisis.

Finally, as cases of COVID-19 increase in our county and state, and in repeating the guidance from our Governor today, it is vital that we continue social distancing and healthy hygiene practices. See the reminder below and visit our website for more information at www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/COVID19.

Social Distancing and Hygiene Practices

There are things we can do as a community to limit the spread of COVID-19 and help keep those most

vulnerable safer. *If you think you are sick or someone you care for is sick, visit the [CDC website for directions on diagnosis and care](#). You can also visit the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services website](#) for details around COVID-19, including information on [Community Mitigation Strategies](#). Practice social distancing when you can, and review and exercise the prevention methods below and in the linked PDF.*

The best prevention for COVID-19, and any other virus, such as the cold or flu, is to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or upper sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid handshakes
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, please stay home and avoid contact with others.
- Keep a distance of 6 feet from your peers and practice social distancing.

Additionally, families and individuals at home can:

- Learn about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.
- If you have respiratory symptoms, **STAY HOME WHEN YOU ARE SICK**. Call your health care provider's office in advance of your visit.
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, like doorknobs, keyboards, cell phones, and light switches.
- Communicate and reinforce best practices for washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes.
- Be prepared if there is COVID-19 in your household or a disruption of daily activities in your community. For example, maintain a supply of medications, food, and other essentials in your house. Consider alternative shopping options such as curbside pickups or online deliveries.
- Access services as much as possible online or by phone.

As always, stay well and take care of one another. We'll be in touch soon.

Sincerely,

Mark Dziatczak

Superintendent

Birmingham Public Schools